

PLAYSTATION PLUS

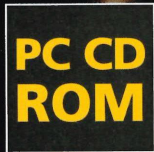
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE SONY PLAYSTATION AND MORE...

SOVIET STRIKE

BETTER RED THAN DEAD...

FINAL FANTASY VII:
IT'S HIP TO BE SQUARE

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY:
WILLIAMS' THREE-FOR-ALL



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SPEED KILLS

BUT IT'S YOUR ONLY HOPE OF ESCAPING

TUNNEL B1

YOUR THROAT'S ON FIRE. THIS TIME. EYES BLEED. HEAD POUNDS. THIS TIME. NEITHER ROCK NOR STEEL WILL STAND IN YOUR WAY. NEITHER CHOICE NOR CHANCE WILL OPPOSE YOU. THE CITY ABOVE IS THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION. MAKE NO MISTAKE, THE PRESSURE IS ON. TUNNEL B1 IS THE ONLY WAY IN. THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY.



CONTENTS

PREVIEWS

SOVIET STRIKE: 18

After trawling through deserts and jungles, your new mission is to stop the perpetrators of the Cold War starting it all over again...

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY: 28

Three games, all the characters, all the moves and all the combos. Is this the ultimate beat 'em up or not?

IRON MAN/X-O MANOWAR: HEAVY METAL: 32

The Marvel Comics superhero comes face to face with Acclaim Comics' power-suited killing machine from an earlier age.

BUBBLE BOBBLE 2: 36

More platforming hi-jinks with those cute brontë Bub and Bob, seeking safety from the machinations of Von Blubber.

FINAL DOOM: 40

More imps, more cacodemons, more revenants and more lost souls. You, of course, have only the same weaponry. Good luck.

DAVIS CUP TENNIS: 44

As the summer of sport turns into an autumn of memories, the latest contender for the PlayStation tennis crown rears its racket.

ROBOTRON X: 46

Another classic game updated for the PlayStation. Seek out those metallic meanies and save humanity from death.

EDITORIAL

Steve Merrett

EDITOR

Alex Simmons

DEPUTY EDITOR

Gary Russell

FEATURES/PRODUCTION EDITOR

Kate Russell

Adam Peters

Warren Harrod

WRITERS

Harry Attrill

PUBLISHER

DESIGN

Jo Woodford

ART EDITOR

Jacqueline Heron

JUNIOR DESIGNER

Gordon Barrick

DESIGNER

ADVERTISING

Marie Lawlor

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Liza Hawkes

GROUP ADVERTISING MANAGER (CONSOLES)

MARKETING

Vicki Jacobs

REPRO

Sarah-Jane Leavy

SYSTEM MANAGER

Sarah Best

SYSTEM COORDINATOR

COVER RENDER

Roger Harris

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING

ADDRESS

Priony Court,

30-32 Farringdon Lane,

London,

EC1R 3AU

TEL: 0171 972 6700 - FAX: 0171

972 6710

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DISTRIBUTION

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SIM CITY 2000



TUNNEL B 1



COVER STORY

BETTER RED THAN DEAD: 18

After redefining the shoot 'em up with the award-winning *Desert Strike*, and its successors *Jungle Strike* and *Urban Strike*, the series is about to enter the next generation. Developed by Electronic Arts in California, this is the first time they have openly talked about their latest project – and *PlayStation Plus* is the magazine offered the opportunity to have an audience with the creators of *Soviet Strike*.



FEATURES

LICENCE TO SELL: 100

Film stars, sporting personalities, comic strip heroes... there was a time when you couldn't switch on a video games system without some famous face or other leering out at you. But take a look at the PlayStation shelves and you'll be hard pushed to find any licences at all. Okay, there's *Alien Trilogy*, and soon there'll be *Die Hard Trilogy*. That's more or less it, so what happened? Have licence holders wised up to the games industry and started asking for more money? Has the industry wised up to the fact that an awful lot of the licensed games of yore were a pile of crap? And are Ninties game players, particularly in the PlayStation market, too sophisticated to translate a photo of Schwarzenegger on the box into a reason for purchase?

REGULARS

NEWS: 6

Squaresoft unveil plans for *Final Fantasy VII*, Viacom support the PlayStation, plus news on *Reloaded*, *Soul Edge*, *Little Big Adventure 2* and *Toshinden Kids*.

MULTIMEDIA: 86

Our regular column looking at the latest books, comics, videos and CDs with just a hint of a gaming connection.

TIPS: 90

A walk-through of *Resident Evil* alongside a selection of handy hints for *Olympic Soccer*.

NEXT MONTH: 110

Important news regarding the first birthday of *PlayStation Plus*.

PLUS POINTS: 113

Your views on the good ship PlayStation.

REVIEWS



TUNNEL B1: 48

Neon's variation on the first person shoot 'em up, but blasting away at guns, vehicles and boxes from inside your own skimmer.

TOBAL No.1: 54

It's a beat 'em up. Sort of. It's an adventure game. Sort of. Well, whatever it is, Square-soft seem to have made it rather good.

RAGING SKIES: 60

You have a plane, missiles, even a cannon. What you need now is the ability to use all of these things and fly at the same time.

SIM CITY 2000: 64

Build your own city, fill it with people, make contact with other cities and begin trade. And if you're bored, nuke 'em!

TIME COMMANDO: 68

Leaping through Earth's past and future, you have to stop a malignant computer virus and rescue the girl. Oh, and survive.

BUBBLE BOBBLE PACK: 72

Bub and Bob find lots of ways to encase whales in bubbles or squash bats with rainbows. All this and Von Blubber, too.

EARTHWORM JIM 2: 76

He's long thin and pink, with arms, legs and a gum. Yup, Jim is back, his suit powered up, and ready to throw pigs at you!

HYPER FINAL MATCH TENNIS: 80

A host of tennis players queueing up to game, set and match you at various tournaments around the globe.

SKELETON WARRIORS: 82

A straightforward adaptation of the kiddie cartoon series sees you fighting wave after wave of boney meanies.

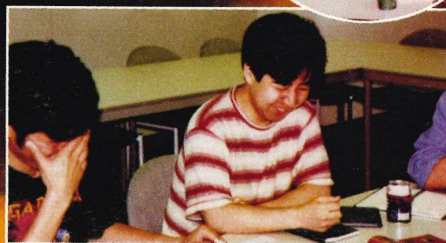
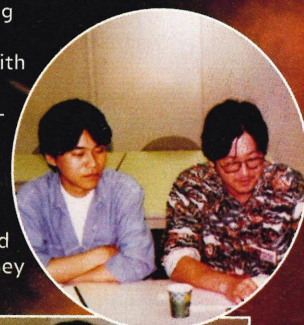
POWER PLAY HOCKEY: 84

Okay, it's not Friday 13th, but get those Jason masks out – it's the first entry into the PlayStation ice hockey game stakes.

ONE TO ONE

TEKKEN-SHOKUNIN: 14

Tekken was Namco's first game to bear the results of their partnership with Sony. The astounding sequel, *Tekken 2*, stunned everyone with its breathtaking graphics and incredible attention to detail. Now *PlayStation Plus* tracks down the team responsible and finds out just how they did it...



MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY





NEWS



Final Fantasy VII

Square's PlayStation Masterpiece

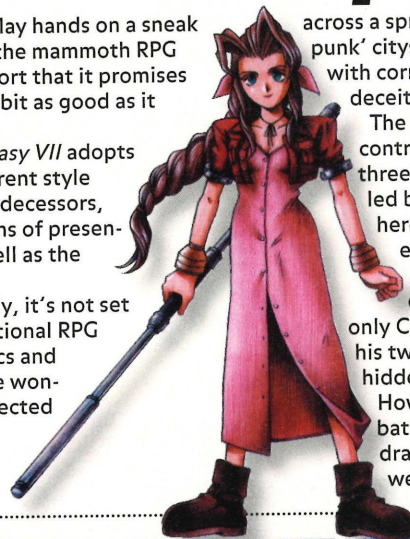
Having announced its defection from the Nintendo 64 to the Sony PlayStation at the beginning of the year, precise details of Squaresoft's *Final Fantasy VII* are finally beginning to filter through to the UK. *Final Fantasy VII*, the latest instalment of the hugely popular role-playing series that has sold in excess of ten million units in Japan alone, was originally planned for the Nintendo console, but after speculation suggesting the machine's cartridge system was too limiting, Square made the move over to the PlayStation and CD. Due for release in Japan in December, *PlayStation Plus*

was first to lay hands on a sneak preview of the mammoth RPG and can report that it promises to be every bit as good as it looks.

Final Fantasy VII adopts a very different style from its predecessors, both in terms of presentation as well as the storyline. Interestingly, it's not set in the traditional RPG world of orcs and goblins; the wonderfully directed opening sequence scanning

across a sprawling 'steampunk' cityscape plagued with corruption and deceit.

The player takes control of a team of three adventurers, led by spiky-haired hero, Cloud. While exploring the intricately-detailed world only Cloud is visible, his two counterparts hidden from view. However, when a battle ensues, they draw their weapons ready to



SQUARE'S TITLES: BUSHIDO BLADE, FINAL FANTASY TACTICS, SAGA FRONTIER.

On the shelves this month...

Williams Arcade Classics

It has been a long time, but GTI's collection of some of the finest veteran coin-ops is finally set for release. Awarded 89% in *PlayStation Plus* Issue 8.



Bust A Move 2

Proving that a good game is more than fancy rendered sprites, *Bust-A-Move 2* is a simplistic puzzler which is immediately addictive. Awarded 92% in *PlayStation Plus* Issue 10.



Formula 1

Psygnosis roar into pole position with a game so layered that it grows with the player. A landmark in software. Awarded 93% in *PlayStation Plus* Issue 11.

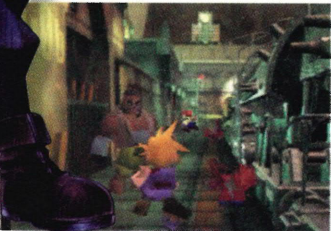
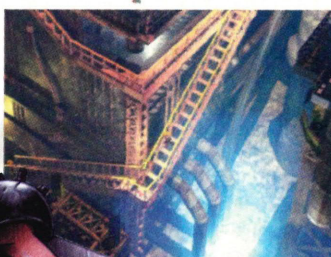
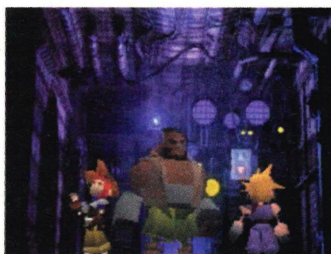


fight. Cloud wields a mighty sword that almost as big as himself, while the hulking Barret has a gatling gun in place of his right hand. Aerith is skilled in the ways of magic, casting lethal spells on his unfortunate foes, or simply using powers to heal wounds.

Combat is no longer turn-based, Square opting for a real-time system that uses time bars to determine recovery time between attacks. Each fight is depicted in 3D too, so each of the polygon warriors can be viewed from practically any angle at almost any distance!

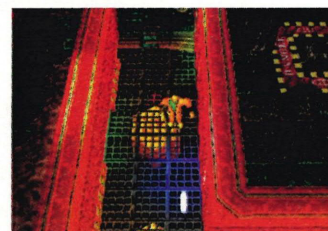
In addition to *Final Fantasy VII*, Square also has another three games currently in development. Two of them are role-playing games, the first being *Final Fantasy Tactics*. Exact details are sparse at the moment, with little else known about the product apart from that it's apparently a *Final Fantasy* aimed at beginners. *Saga Frontier* is also a role-playing game, one that adheres to the traditional hack 'n' slay theme and features sickly-sweet characters and cutesy graphics. Lastly, *Bushido Blade* is a beat 'em up, but one that's very different from Square's other fighter,

Tobal No. 1. Rather than polygon warriors punching and grappling with each other, the battle is fought between sword-swinging Samurai. So far the presentation looks awesome but the actual game mechanics have yet to be proven. Let's hope all three games live up to expectations when they're released next year.

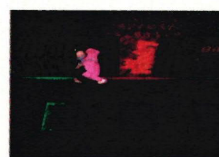
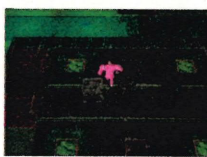
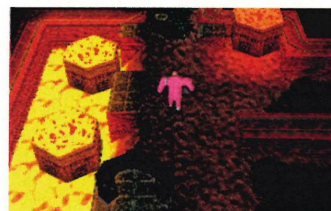


Reloaded

As the PlayStation's Christmas line-up starts to take shape, Gremlin are beavering away on the eagerly-anticipated sequel to *Loaded: Reloaded*. Retaining the original's frenetic blasting and graphical effects, Gremlin have listened to complaints regarding the first game and have worked on adding variety to the game, via more weapons and characters. *Loaded's* end of game sequence showed the villain of the piece, F.U.B coming a cropper in an impressive rendered sequence. It transpires, though, the seemingly fatal end he met was but a smoke-screen, and F.U.B's brain pod made a miraculous escape from his damaged body, and fled to a desert planet populated by a band of hippy misfits and aspiring artists. Seizing control of the body of one such space bum, F.U.B's plans for world domination were given the green light again, but not before he changed his name to C.H.U.B – Charming, Handsome, Erudite Bastard, as opposed to Fat, Ugly... well, you get the picture. As such, the chaotic shoot 'em up action which typified *Loaded* returns in a massively enhanced form, with Gremlin's in-house team creating seven new worlds for the player to devastate, and with 2000AD artist Jason Brashill returning to create new looks for the surviving heroes, and a handful of all-new death-dealers. Following directly on from the events of the first game, the



majority of *Loaded's* heroes have returned, with new additions to the ranks including Maggie, a gun-toting robo-nun, and a cannibalistic misfit called The Consumer. Similarly, each of the eight characters have now been given a range of special moves which are performed using complex twists of the Dpad and frantic button combinations – and Gremlin have also upped the difficulty stakes by making the player's guns hazardous to the others players. In terms of gameplay additions, Gremlin are quick to point out the addition of puzzle aspects to the game, with the players now interrogating key characters for information, although in keeping with the game's OTT nature, torture may be the only way to make them blab. And, with death-dealing being the mainstay of the game, points and extra abilities are added to players with the greatest number of kills or treasures collected. *Reloaded* is currently planned for a November release, and the first full preview of the game will be gracing the next issue of *PlayStation Plus*.



Tekken 2

Namco come good with a PAL version of the greatest beat 'em up of all time. Sadly, word reaches us that the UK code is a bit slo-ow. Awarded 95% in *PlayStation Plus* Issue 8.



Time Commando

Adeline and EA offer a unique slant on the beat 'em up and shoot 'em up genres which is let down by an iffy control system. Awarded 81% in this issue of *PlayStation Plus*.



Die Hard Trilogy

Forget old game compilations, EA and Fox Interactive have put together three superb – and original – games, based on the movies. Awarded 92% in *PlayStation Plus* Issue 11.





TESTED

On Trial: The Aura Interactor backpack. Available September, priced £69.99. Strapped to one's back, the Interactor plugs into the PlayStation and, using an actuator that responds to bass sound waves, vibrates to each explosion from your favourite game.

DOOM The perfect game to test the Interactor. Cranking the power up to maximum, the pack is at it's most effective when the chaingun rattles off buckets of ammunition, making the pack quivers uncontrollably. Rocket explosions are equally meaty but their effect is dampened by the low-level background sounds – music and the growls of nearby enemies make the Interactor pulse intensely which is extremely distracting and, after a particularly heavy night beforehand, could lead to acute nausea.

TEKKEN 2 Like *Doom* even the slightest noise triggers off the Interactor, so background music must be switched off to avoid certain vomiting. The pack proves more effective with *Tekken 2* than *Doom*, largely because there's less background noise. With each bone-crunching thump the pack vibrates, but this hardly gives the feeling of actually being in the game. Disappointing.

GOLDIE The Interactor is designed to be compatible with music CDs as well as games, so what better way to test the backpack than with a bit of drum and bass. After enduring just one track it's difficult not to feeling queasy – the pack furiously shakes with each low-pitched boom, causing your vision to blur and your stomach to turn. It may be more expensive than a night on the beer but the results are practically the same!

OVERALL The Interactor is supposed to enhanced your gaming experience; it doesn't. What it does do is vibrate vigorously, make a hell of a lot of distorted noise and makes your vision blur. This, of course, makes it very difficult to concentrate in the game and therefore renders it fairly useless. However, it's got great novelty value when used in conjunction with music CDs with only one drawback – as the in-built speaker is of such poor quality, the sound booming from the monitor must be cranked up high enough to drown out the distorted wail crackling the pack. An over-priced gadget that fails to inject excitement into games old or new.



Viacom Supports PlayStation

Viacom is the latest in a long line of respected publishers to sign up for the Sony's 32bit wonder machine. The American company currently has five games in the pipeline, the first due to appear being *Aeon Flux*. It's a 3D adventure starring the sexy spy Aeon, and is based on the popular MTV animated series of the same name. Diving into the first-person perspective world of the delectable Flux, players must guide this buxom beauty through 35 levels of pistol-packing, puzzle-solving action. Filled with enemies and loads of ever-useful power-ups, one of *Aeon Flux*'s most notable features is the use of motion-capture which realistically animates all of the Kung-Fu kicks and acrobatic moves that the gamer can pull off during the game.

Another MTV-licenced game is *Slamscape*, a super-fast blast 'em up set in a freaked out cyberspace. Pilots control a rocket-powered skimmer across five bizarre mindscapes, rescuing trapped ids and grabbing precious energy pods to keep their craft running at maximum power. As well as texture-mapped graphics running at a staggering 60 frames-per-second, *Slamscape* also boasts music by "hot" band God Lives Underwater, the American alternative to Guru Josh. Or something.

Those interested in all things cyber will probably already heard of *Snow Crash*, as it's based on the similarly-titled novel by Neal Stephenson. Dragged into this 360° action game, players must nullify the computer virus that's destroying the Metaverse computer network. Thanks to it's unique 'tether-cam' *Snow Crash* has a distinctive feel to it, and with around forty missions on offer, there's more than enough challenge there. *Deathdrome* is yet another futuristic fight-to-the-death

blasts which relies more on nifty joystick skills rather than intellectual prowess. To succeed, players will need to combine driving ability with combat skills, and only then will they be able to survive the 3D horror that is *Deathdrome*. The third dimension seems to be the key to Viacom's releases, as *The Divide: Enemies Within* is a platform game – only in 3D. Stranded on a primitive planet after spending eons in hypersleep, the game dumps the hapless gamer in the middle of furious battle against cybernetically-engineered aliens across fifty levels of sensual overload. Expect more information on these promising titles in the coming months.

Samurai Showdown RPG

The stars of SNK's popular beat 'em up, *Samurai Showdown* are set to appear in a forthcoming RPG. The originally-titled *Samurai Showdown* RPG offers five characters, each of whom is equipped with special weapons and moves. The reason for the team's quest is as-yet undisclosed, but SNK are promising a game with a map spanning over 4700 screens, and containing over 200 enemy sprites. Based as it is on one of the bloodiest beat 'em ups around, *Samurai Showdown RPG* is also incredibly violent, with fighting forming an integral part of the game. SNK have yet to find a UK distributor, but word reaches us that Sony are keeping an eye on this.

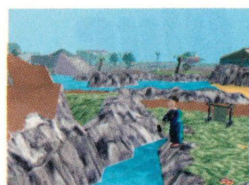
Deep Sea Adventure

Taking a break from their latest *Toshinden* releases, Takara are planning an ecological epic in the form of *Deep Sea Adventure* which is set for an imminent Japanese release. Earth is dying after many years of pollution, and one too many wars has upset the balance of nature, flooding the entire planet. In the darkest depths of the newly-formed dark oceans lie mysteries relating to the lost world of Atlantis, which could give new hope to man if he is to start again. While searching for these secrets, many men have gone missing, and one such man was the father of *Deep Sea Adventure*'s hero, Chris. *Deep Sea Adventure* uses a number of game styles, with the trip to Atlantis resembling *Aquanaut's Holiday* with similarly detailed sprites and cockpit view, while the actual Atlantean visit is akin to one of Squaresoft's RPGs. *Deep Sea Adventure* has yet to be confirmed as a UK release, but it certainly looks to be one of the better Japanese titles of late.



Sato City

Merit Studios are the development team responsible for a number of secondary format conversions for Codemasters, and are set to make their PlayStation debut with a futuristic thriller called (and set in) *Sato City*. *Sato City* is a dark, dangerous place where big corporations rule everything, and where anything can be bought at a price. Virtually everybody in the city is on the poverty line, and the corporations are renowned for strong-arm tactics to keep the citizens in check. Enter the player as Skinner, an ex-soldier just back from one of the many wars. In the time Skinner has been away, the conditioning controlling the majority of the populace has worn off, and he wants his girlfriend Lynette to experience the freedom of mind he enjoys. However, on returning to take her away from the city, Lynette has been kidnapped, and the journey through *Sato City* to find her begins. *Sato City* is a full 3D landscape, and Skinner's mission takes him through high-resolution polygon-based stages, with the Skinner sprite fully interactive with the objects and people around him. A release date has yet to be set, but *Sato City* should open its doors nearer Christmas.



Little Big Adventure 2

EA's stunning PC arcade/adventure, *Little Big Adventure 2*, is PlayStation-bound. One of EA's most critically-acclaimed games to date, Adeline are hard at work porting the game's many 3D locations over to the Sony machine. The game is set on the planet Twinsun, where a magician called Twinsen finds himself in the middle of an alien invasion plan, as space ships start to descend from the skies. The ships are piloted by seemingly-friendly aliens called Esmers who immediately win the trust of the locals. Too immediately. However, with the locals duped by them, our hero is whisked away to the Esmers' home planet, AZeelich, where he finds other magically-gifted people imprisoned. While in the dungeons, though, Twinsen learns that the Esmers plan to destroy his homeworld, so an escape bid begins with the player guiding him through hundreds of stunning locations, solving object-related puzzles and flexing his magic skills. PlayStation *Little Big Adventure 2* is roughly 60% complete, and EA are anticipating a release towards the end of this year.

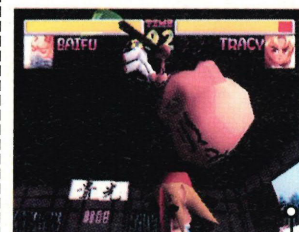
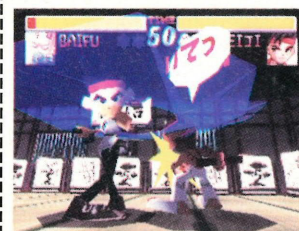
Soul Edge

Namco's PlayStation conversion of their stunning *Soul Edge* coin-op is now 75% complete, and the early indications are that it exceeds the quality of *Tekken 2* for the Sony machine. The original *Soul Edge* coin-op used the PlayStation System 11 board, and *Soul Edge* exists within a true 3D arena as seen in the likes of *Toshinden* as opposed to the 3D sprites within *Tekken's* 2D play area. Similarly, while the game's moves are every bit as realistic and easy to effect as those of *Tekken 2*, *Soul Edge's* major new addition are a host of weapons. The game's ten characters each carry a weapon of some description, such as large swords, shields and axes. The addition of such weapons opens up new combo possibilities, and Namco have also extended the range of the characters' moves with a three-height blocking system, and a wider range of throws, kicks and punches. With motion-captured sprites and Namco using a smaller arena for 'ring out' opportunities, the *Soul Edge* coin-op was a worthy successor to *Tekken 2*. Although the game has yet to appear on Sony's 1997 line-up, a PAL release is a certainty, continuing the healthy relationship between Sony and Namco. The Japanese release of the game is set for sometime in November, and Sony are almost certain to speed the PAL conversion along for an early 1997 release — with no PAL borders if their promises of no more lazy UK conversions is to be believed.



Toshinden Kids

Following a trend started by Sega and their *Virtua Kids* offering, Takara have been ever-quick to jump on a bandwagon with *Toshinden Kids*. All your old *Toshinden* favourites are present — Duke Lombard, Kayin and Run-Go — but in a shorter, cuter form, and with bizarrely overgrown heads. Similarly, all the old moves are present, but the frequently bizarre Japanese humour comes to the fore, as limbs extend as the characters fight it out, and comedy sound effects become the order of the day.



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PLAYSTATION
PLUS

RECOMMENDS

DIE HARD TRILOGY

Fox Interactive's realisation of the classic films as three separate games is absolutely stunning. The pack not only offers a game that out-cop's Sega's *Virtua Cop*, but features one of the best driving games the PlayStation has seen to date. Excellent value.



OLYMPIC SOCCER

It may not look that hot, but Eidos' superb kick around is the most playable footie game since *Sensible Soccer* for the Amiga. A wealth of moves, instinctive play, and intelligent CPU sides ranks this well above the likes of *Actua Soccer* and *Adidas Power Soccer* in the PlayStation premier League.



FORMULA 1

Whether you're a fan of *Virtua Racing* or have ever wanted to get to grips with a real Formula 1 car, this is the perfect game. *Formula 1* is a rarity, a game that grows with the player. You'll start off on automatic, but gradually you'll opt for real gears and no corner assist. A modern-day classic.



RESIDENT EVIL

Capcom's superb arcade/adventure is finally here in its PAL form, and with only minimal screen borders and a handful of gore cut out. That aside, *Resident Evil* is an engrossing adventure with more plot twists than an episode of *Scooby-Doo*, and a welcome change of pace from beat 'em up meisters, Capcom.



Toshinden 2 Plus

Having listened to criticisms of *Toshinden 2*, Takara's Japanese arm are releasing a special edition of the game to tie in with Sony of Japan's 'The Best' campaign which is showcasing the best software for the PlayStation. *Toshinden 2 Plus* now uses the machine's memory card and extra features. The updated code is set to benefit from a fully playable character set (including bosses), time attack modes, a refined control system, and aesthetic enhancements which include new speech, along with extra and tidier views. With *Toshinden 2* only just released on these shores, a PAL version of the enhanced game is unlikely leaving importers as your only option.



The Incredible Hulk: Pantheon Saga

Briefly mentioned as *Hulk 3D* last issue, Eidos' Marvel licence has now been dubbed *The Pantheon Saga*. The game mixes elements of 2D platform games with a *Doom* perspective, and unites the Hulk with familiar Marvel superheroes, including Atlanta, Ajax, and Agamemnon. The game features five missions set all over the globe, and producers Attention to Detail claim to have created the perfect vehicle to display the Hulk's power and the PlayStation's 3D capabilities. *The Pantheon Saga* is currently pencilled in for a November release, with Eidos predicting 'Hulkmania' to envelope us shortly before.

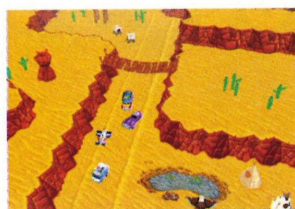


Guts and Garters

Ocean are planning to take on the might of *Loaded* and *Lone Soldier* with *Guts and Garters* — best described as *Commando* meets *Fade to Black*. Subtitled *DNA Danger*, *Guts and Garters* follows the player's attempts to defeat the evil Admiral Worf. Intelligence reports state that Worf is preparing hideous genetic creature for a proposed invasion, and his research has also brought him into days of creating the ultimate biological weapon. As such, the authorities send in K-Force, leaving the player — as Hank 'Guts' Carter and a mate as Stacy 'Garters' Pringle — to enter the scrolling stages and generally blow seven barrels out of Worf and his mutant army. Resembling a graphically-superior version of past *Green Beret*/*Ikari Warriors* shoot 'em ups, *Guts and Garters* is a stunning-looking blaster with incredible attention to detail and suitably fast levels. A provisional November release date is being mooted, and a full preview is to follow in a forthcoming *PlayStation Plus*.

Oddball Engines

Another rival to the *Micro Machines* and *Supersonic Racers* crown has arrived, in the shape of Merit Studio's *Oddball Engines*. Utilising the same top-down view, and with twelve racers and vehicles on offer, *Oddball Engines* invites the player to race through courses set in Atlantis, on the Moon, and through jungles. Four players can play simultaneously, and the rendered locations are realised in 'true' 3D and use parallax scrolling to add a feeling of extra depth. More soon.



SF Alpha 2

Virgin have secured another coup with the signing of *Street Fighter Alpha 2* from Capcom. The Japanese code started to kick faces on August 14th, and Capcom are currently putting together the PAL code, while bearing in mind Sony UK's mission to obliterate borders from UK games. *Street Fighter Alpha 2* is more of the same action but characters from past games, (Dhalsim, Balrog) have returned to the fold, along with new combatants. Virgin have yet to settle upon a release date for the UK edition, but bearing in mind the phenomenal success of the first version, we'd lay odds that it'll be early in the new year. One downside, however, is that word reaches us that Capcom's strong relationship with Virgin (the Japanese are said to be over the moon with Virgin's handling of both *Street Fighter Alpha* and *Resident Evil*), has had adverse side-effects on Capcom's X-Men conversion for Acclaim. Although code has been seen of the X-Men in action, nobody at Acclaim can get a final date for a Beta disc (ie code for Sony to approve), which is rather worrying...



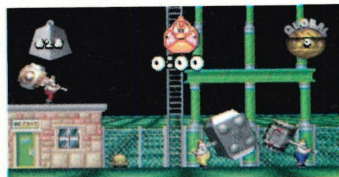
**Little Johnny was
enjoying the sedate
pace of his new lift
to school, when...**





PENNY RACERS

With Moto Toon Grand Prix 2 and Ridge Racer Revolution already on their winning laps, Sony are aiming for a hat-trick of quality racing games with *Penny Racers*. With thirty different styles of vehicle, including sports cars, jeeps and trucks, *Penny Racers* is a first-person viewed racer where the basic aim is to qualify in the beginner's races to gain entry into the game's prestigious Grand Prix. A number of race styles are on offer, and these are spread across seven courses each of which play host to numerous hazards and bonus opportunities — the latter of which allow the player to upgrade their car. As such, the preparatory races allow the user to create a car suitably equipped for the rigours of the Grand Prix season. Artdink, the developers of AIV Evolution, are the team responsible for *Penny Racers* which should be here early next year.



Trash-It!!!

Warner Interactive are tackling the puzzle genre with an oddity called *Trash-It!!!*. Put simply, *Trash-It!!!* is all-out carnage, as up to 16 players are let loose in a series of built up areas with massive hammers. Apparently, the game world was once a quiet and peaceful area, but has now been overrun by rent-a-baddie, Doctor Moonbeam. Thus to reach Moonbeam, the players need to work together to smash a way through the cities in search of the mad Doctor. Starting with a tiny mallet, there are thirty different hammers on offer, but the wanton destruction must also be balanced by saving the citizens within ('Timmies') before they are crushed under the debris. *Trash-It!!!* certainly lives up to its odd-ball tag, but Warner are predicting it will offer simplistic playability as offered by the likes of *Bust-A-Move 2*.

PLAYSTATION PLUS

Staff Writer Required...

PlayStation Plus is on the look out for fresh new writing talent to fill a Staff Writer vacancy within the magazine. Applicants must have left school with a minimum of four GCSEs, with good English grades an essential. The applicant must also be willing to work in London where the magazine's offices are located. A good knowledge of video games both past and present is also a requirement to ensure that the standard of writing within the magazine is kept to its current high standard. Only written applications and CVs with an example review, in what you consider to be the *PlayStation Plus* house style, will be accepted, and should be addressed to Staff Writer Position, at the *PlayStation Plus* editorial address. Please do not ring the *PlayStation Plus* offices regarding the position, and all successful applicants will be contacted in due course.

THE BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO CHARTS

What's tickling your fancy in your local Blockbuster rental store — now with added PlayStation.

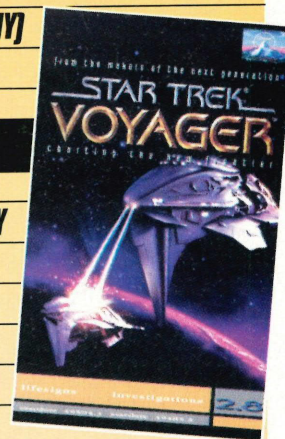
Last month's positions in brackets.

TOP TEN VIDEO GAME RENTALS

1. (2) **DESTRUCTION DERBY (PSYGNOSIS)**
2. (1) **ADIDAS SOCCER (PSYGNOSIS)**
3. (NE) **INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD (KONAMI)**
4. (5) **TWISTED METAL (SONY)**
5. (4) **RIDGE RACER (SONY)**
6. (3) **ALIEN TRILOGY (ACCLAIM)**
7. (6) **DOOM (GT)**
8. (7) **WORMS (OCEAN)**
9. (9) **ESPN EXTREME GAMES (SONY)**
10. (8) **TEKKEN (NAMCO)**

TOP TEN RETAIL VIDEOS

1. (NE) **RIVERDANCE: THE JOURNEY**
2. (NE) **WATERWORLD**
3. (NE) **THE SWAN PRINCESS**
4. (RE) **LEON**
- (NE) **STAR TREK: VOYAGER 2.8**
6. (1) **BATMAN FOREVER**
7. (NE) **HUNCHBACK: SINGALONG SONGS**
8. (NE) **SPIDERMAN: VENOM SAGA**
9. (8) **POCAHANTAS**
10. (10) **DUMB AND DUMBER**



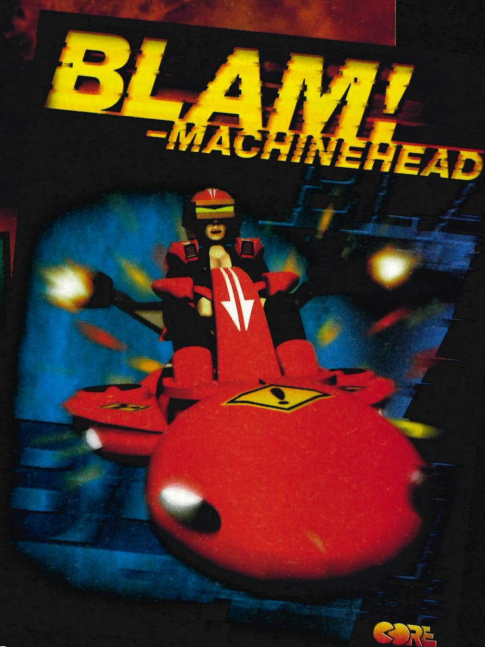
TOP TEN RENTAL VIDEOS

1. (1) **SEVEN**
2. (2) **AGE VENTURA: WHEN NATURE CALLS**
3. (3) **BABE**
4. (NE) **DANGEROUS MINDS**
5. (NE) **LOCH NESS**
6. (4) **ASSASSINS**
7. (NE) **SHOWGIRLS**
8. (5) **GOLDENEYE**
9. (NE) **FAIR GAME**
10. (NE) **CANDYMAN 2**

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CORE



ONE-TO-ONE

TEKKEN 2 ARTWORK NAMCO 1995, 1996 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

鉄拳
TEKKEN 2



Tekken-Shokunin*



ONE-TO-ONE

* AN AUDIENCE WITH THE CRAFTSMEN BEHIND TEKKEN...

Just as *Street Fighter* rekindled the public's interest in fighting games, *Tekken* went one step better and completely reinvented the genre. Gone were the days when 2D sprites performed a number of predictable moves on each other. Instead, Namco's classic allowed for all the special moves games players have expected from past games, but shown from virtually any angle as the huge, fully 3D fighters got to grips with each other against equally stunning 3D locations. Quite simply, *Tekken* was brilliant. It had secret moves, combo moves which only perseverance and the practise the game warranted could offer, and extra hidden bosses to prolong the interest even further. Surely, then, if the game was this good it could never be topped? And then came *Tekken 2*.

Fulfilling all expectations, *Tekken 2* was the perfect sequel. It had more characters, more moves, better graphics and more instinctive play. In fact, *Tekken 2* is such a prime example of the beat 'em up genre that every other fighting game released for the PlayStation is compared to it. Yet, for all their success, the people behind the *Tekken* series are rarely seen and interviewed even less. But *PlayStation Plus* is made of stronger stuff, and was kindly given an audience with Masamichi Abe (Designer), Kazuaki Fujimoto (Graphic Designer), Masahiro Kimoto (Design Coordinator), Naoki Ito (Programmer), and Hitoshi Saito (Programmer) – aka the geniuses behind one of the greatest PlayStation games of all time...

TEKKEN WAS NAMCO'S

FIRST GAME TO BEAR THE RESULTS OF THEIR PARTNERSHIP WITH SONY. USING THE PLAYSTATION'S LOW-COST HIGH-TECHNOLOGY

BOARD THEY WERE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY BRING THIS INCREDIBLE 3D ARCADE FIGHTING CLASSIC ONTO THE HOME CONSOLE. THEIR ASTOUNDING SEQUEL TEKKEN 2 STUNNED EVERYONE WITH ITS BREATHTAKING GRAPHICS AND INCREDIBLE ATTENTION TO DETAIL. NOW AS WORK COMMENCES ON WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BECOME THE ULTIMATE VERSION OF TEKKEN, PLAYSTATION PLUS TRACKS DOWN THE TEAM RESPONSIBLE AND FINDS OUT JUST HOW THEY DID IT...



Can you explain the development process of porting *Tekken 2* from System 11 to the PlayStation?

TEKKEN TEAM: The arcade System 11 board has twice as much main memory and video memory as the PlayStation so in order to port *Tekken 2* our main task was to reduce the size of the program code in various places. To do this, the main system – which is broken up into picture, colour and sound parts etc – is reduced in a number of ways by cutting some of the program code out.

encounter any difficulties with the PlayStation hardware? What was the main limitation?

TT: Actually the number of polygons hasn't changed but, the resolution has been cut to a quarter of the coin-op version; the PlayStation's memory is half that of the arcade board. You could say that it was a little extreme to cut the colours so drastically. However, if you cut the resolution, in the worst case the pictures look a little coarse and rough but if you cut the program by 50%, it just doesn't work. How to handle the balance between these two areas was the main difficulty for us.



PSP: How long did it take to design each of the characters, and how many polygons are they made up of?

TT: Each character is made up of around 800 polygons. As for the modelling, the development time was fairly short, anywhere from around three days to a few weeks depending on the character. We didn't really use any rough drawings. Mainly we used the image we had in mind directly. In particular Bruce was very quick to design and model.



Why did you decide to go for the more angular look of the fighters compared to the first *Tekken*?

TT: The first *Tekken* didn't use light source shading. The *Tekken 2* characters have full light reflection shading from the stage. This system of shading causes them to look as they do.



Who are your favourite characters and why exactly?

ABE: Paul and Marshal Law. Each one has their own respective good points. Paul's martial arts feel good to use while Law is both fast and has a lot of combination attacks.

FUJIMOTO: Kazuya and Heihachi. Their moves are almost the same so it's easy to



Did you use the original arcade code or did you rewrite parts of it?

TT: While we did use some of the original code, most of it was rewritten. It's difficult to say how much of it was rewritten because it was different for each person but around 50% of the development time was spent rewriting – and about 70% of the program code was rewritten.



How many people were involved in the game's creation?

TT: It's a little difficult to say specifically but around 25 people were directly assigned to the project with another 25 assisting at various times during the development.



Did you have help from the original team who produced the coin-op?

TT: Yes, we did.



The Playstation version seems to have slightly less floor polygons. Did you



MASAMICHI ABE, KAZUAKI FUJIMOTO, MASAHIRO KIMOTO, NAOKI ITO AND HITOSHI SAITO FACE A PLAYSTATION PLUS GRILLING.



remember them and both of them are bad characters. Up until now I don't think there has been an 'evil' hero in a game so they're more interesting. I also worked on their ending-movie so they have a particular interest for me.

KIMOTO: Nina Williams, Roger and Kum. I like them because although they're animals they're using the same kind of martial arts as the other characters. I was also involved in their creation as well.

ITO: Paul Phoenix. He's got a powerful fist and playing him has a great feeling.

SAITO: Jack-2. I've got an interest in him because he fights in order to make a fool out of his opponents.

Q Are we going to see another *Tekken* game on the PlayStation?

TT: We don't know about the PlayStation because we're all currently working on the arcade version of *Tekken 3*.

Q Are there any plans to convert *Tekken 2* to another console? What would be the main differences if *Tekken 2* was produced for the Nintendo 64, for example?

TT: We don't know about any other plans to convert *Tekken 2*. Currently we are studying the specification of the Nintendo 64 but, it's too early to make any judgements.

Q What was your thinking behind including so many unique modes into the PlayStation version?

TT: For the single player, the basic One Player vs CPU was insufficient so we wanted to add some extra modes. We first made up a preliminary list consisting of various ideas for possible new modes which one by one we tried to implement. However, the time we had to complete them was very short – we almost considered giving up the idea of doing them all and so it's only due to everyone's efforts that we managed to include the number of game modes that we did.

Q What are your personal records for Time Attack and Survival mode?

TT: <Laugh> Amongst the five of us there aren't any particularly good scores however, someone in the debug team scored 71 in the Survival Mode. For us here I think the best time for Time Attack is around three minutes.

Q The Practice Mode is an excellent addition – were you influenced by any other beat 'em up games when including these extra features?

TT: While we were aware that there were

practice modes in other games, our greatest influence were the comments, ideas and requests from the people around us.

Q When you leave a character alone in Practice Mode thought bubbles appear. What was your thinking behind this?

TT: While we were creating the Practice Mode during the development stage there was a debug monitor above the characters' heads. When both of the characters were standing still neither of the monitors moved and we thought it looked kind of sad and lonely. We really wanted to put something more concrete in there, such as "I'm hungry!" for Kuma or if a character did a successful hit "That was good!" etc, but we didn't have any time and there would have been too much data to enter so we just included a few small pictures instead.

Q Do you think that the floating combinations provides an unfair balance for some of the characters?

TT: Maybe being able to start the floating combination so easily is a little unfair but,



we've made it so that you can't win just with pure strength. If you continue using the floating combinations the damage progressively becomes less and less. If you connected together a massive combo without any reduction in damage, your opponent would be killed quickly and then the game would become tedious so we allowed the player to use them but the damage is reduced instead.

Q In terms of game-play where do you think the game shows its true depth? Is it the number of moves and fighters?

TT: I don't think it's the number of moves although it may be one of the reasons. As you would expect it's the varying level of difficulty for the martial art techniques and the variety of attack combinations available. Each character has many different moves. By combining them together in different ways and hitting your opponent in different places – eg head, legs, arms etc – the effect is different and the player can then use them in different ways and aspects. This level of detail allows the player to practice the moves and research the combos so that the more he puts

into the game, the more he gets out of the game. In effect the player can learn as much or as little as he wants.

Q Were there any particular moves or combinations that were difficult in translating across to the PlayStation?

TT: With regard to data compression all the characters were difficult but this wasn't really related to individual character moves or their combinations.

Q In hindsight, are there any moves or play modes you would have liked to have added to your conversion?

TT: If there had been enough time we would have liked to include some moves for Tuxedo Kazuya and a special "High-Heel" attack for Anna where she could 'stab' with a heel attack and stick it into the opponent. With regards to other modes, it was a popular idea to make the "Wooden Man" mode. Using a wooden puppet-like doll you would have been able to take attacks from other characters, edit them and then build them together into your own original character. Unfortunately circumstances didn't allow us to do it.

Q We seem to have found all 25 characters – are there any others that we don't know about?

TT: No.

Q Can you tell us the correct names for all the hidden modes?

TT: We don't have any special names. Japanese magazines have usually seen the features and coined their own phrase. The following is what we call the modes:
[NB: Deka means 'big' in Japanese]
Big Head Mode – Deka Tekken
Bigger Head Mode – Deka Deka Tekken
Wireframe Mode – Behind Camera
Sky Hide Mode – Flying (Deka) Tekken

Q The music is some of the finest music ever heard in a game – were you influenced by any particular bands or music?

TT: As the music was composed by a variety of music producers, who each had their own particular tastes and personal inspiration, it wouldn't be true to say that they were influenced by any one particular music.

Q How many people were involved in the music composition, and how long did it take to produce?

TT: There were seven composers involved in the creation of the background music. It took them about two months to complete it.

Q Have any plans to release the music as a CD?

TT: Yes. A remixed audio CD will be released by NEC Avenue in Japan.

Q Can you tell us about the inspirations behind some of the characters?

TT: With respect to Roger; he was created one evening by one of the developers doing the modelling who just wanted to see a kangaroo doing Kazuya's "Dragon Upper-Cut". Actually he had other jobs to do but, he put them aside temporarily to do it. He finished Roger in just one night so when we all came

in the next morning, we found it completed.

Is there any more you can add to Yoshimistu's background profile as his identity still remains a secret?

TT: We decided to make his history a secret on purpose. Originally he was going to be just an ordinary Ninja but, we wanted to make him a little more bizarre and mysterious. It's a real secret so we can't reveal anything else.

Do each of the characters in Tekken 2 utilise real martial arts as in Virtua Fighter 2?

TT: Certainly. Many of them use real martial arts, for example King's a pro-wrestler, Michelle uses Kempo, Nina has Akaido martial arts and Baek Doo San is skilled in Tae Kwon Do.

How did you research the martial arts to get the correct movement?

TT: We used a lot of books and videos. Especially videos. Both technical martial art videos and a variety of 'action' movie videos. We would watch a video and look for good scenes where someone had a used a particularly interesting fighting style. We built up a stock of them and then put them together in order to create a fighting move.

The majority of the endings for the characters are quite straightforward, but, the Angel's ending was something of a confusing experience. Could you explain the story please?

TT: There is no story. She was only created because we wanted a beautiful image for the ending. Above all, her image represents, in a spiritual way, all the characters' souls. Along with that we wanted to use the image of her descending from heaven.

Is she a real angel?

TT: Whether she's a real angel or not wasn't decided on.

Is she the direct enemy of Devil Kazuya?

TT: Not really. While she exists in the same existence as Devil Kazuya, some may view her as the 'demon', while others may see her as having descended from heaven.

When you started work on Tekken 2 did you have a target audience in mind? Did this affect the game's play mechanics?

TT: We wanted to appeal to a large audience, both players of the first Tekken and people who like fighting games in general but, also to beginners. With regards to the expert game players we put a lot of depth into the gameplay and included the Arcade Mode. For those people who weren't very good at the first Tekken and so didn't play it very much we made it easier for them to start by including the Training Mode.

What are your all time favourite games? Did these games influence you in the development of Tekken 2?

ABE: I like lots of other fighting games, but also Bio-Hazard and Lost World.

FUJIMOTO: My favourite games are Virtua Fighter 2 and King of Fighters '95

KIMOTO: I don't like the other fighting games. That's why I wanted to create one that I did like.

ITO: I also like fighting games but I like adventure games too. Maybe it influenced me in so much that you can play them a hundred or a thousand times.

SAITO: Puzzle games. My favourite of which is PACAttack.

Recently Capcom have produced a puzzle game using the characters from the Street Fighter and Darkstalkers series'. What do you think about the possibility of producing a Tekken puzzle game?

TT: We haven't really considered it yet. If we could find an interesting puzzle system we could do it but, we don't want to simply just copy another company's idea.

If you could have had more time in developing Tekken 2 for the PlayStation what would you have liked to change or add?

TT: It would have been good if we could have added the construction mode. In addition we really wanted to add text bubbles to the characters, for example when you hit your

"We would watch a video and look for good scenes where someone had a used a particularly interesting fighting style. We then put them together in order to create a fighting move."

opponent a bubble with "Aarrghh!" or "Ouch!" would appear. However, it wasn't just a matter of time, the CD was already filled to bursting point. If we had 2 CDs then almost anything becomes possible.

What response have you received from the Japanese gamers to Tekken 2?

TT: We read a lot of the questionnaires that were sent in. In particular everybody liked the Practice Mode.

Do you have any last personal comments about your work on Tekken 2?

ABE: For me, the computer player algorithms have a personal interest

as I wanted the single player to enjoy the game more.

FUJIMOTO: I worked on the ending movies for three of the characters. Of them Kazuya was the one I put the most effort into.

KIMOTO: To give this game the best screen graphics ever I devoted it all my attention and really put my spirit into it.

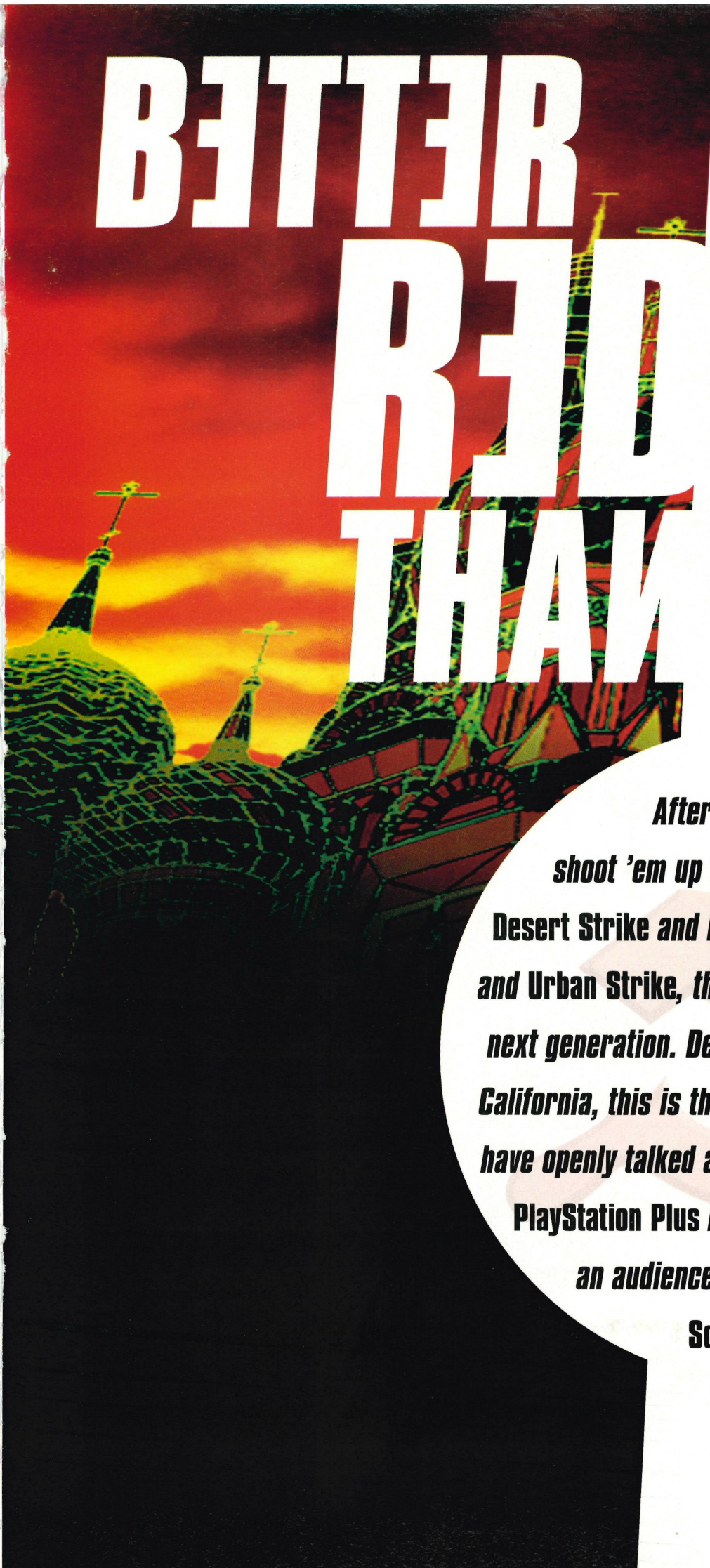
ITO: I wanted everyone to enjoy all the characters and every aspect of Tekken 2 to the full so I created all the various modes such as Team Battle and Practice Mode.

SAITO: I wanted to make it so they could play it for a lifetime.





SOVIET STRIKE



BETTER RED THAN DEAD



COVER STORY

After redefining the shoot 'em up with the award-winning Desert Strike and its successors Jungle Strike and Urban Strike, the series is about to enter the next generation. Developed by Electronic Arts in California, this is the first time the coders d'elite have openly talked about their latest project, and PlayStation Plus is the 'chosen one' granted an audience with the creators of Soviet Strike.



SOVIET STRIKE



In a room shrouded in darkness, a television screen blinks into life.

Four men sit around a large table, the American flag hanging from the wall which bears the familiar ■, ●, ▲ logo. They chat idly and sip mineral water from plastic cups, blissfully unaware that they are being watched. Unaware, that is, until a voice from the darkness shouts "Hello America!" Yes, we have made contact.

The four guys on screen are actually the key members of the fifty-strong team currently developing *Soviet Strike*. They are sitting in the plush boardroom of Electronic Arts' headquarters in San Mateo, California, and we are speaking to them live via a state-of-the-art video phone. Such is the wonder of modern technology.

After the customary pleasantries ("Is it sunny in England?" Not as sunny as California, I suspect) each of the guys takes in turn to introduce themselves and give a brief resume of their coding career. John Manley, a stocky, bearded man, is the first to take the transatlantic trip via satellite. "Previously I worked on the three Strike products, I was the game director for *Desert*, *Jungle* and *Urban Strike*. Prior to that I was assistant producer on a product called *Deluxe Video* for the Amiga, and then I went on to do *Desert Strike* for the Genesis." Michael Becker is the next visitor to cyberland. "Back in 1982 I was hired to come in at Imagic and put together the first group of computer graphic artists to work with programmers, and then I became creative director there, worked on all sorts of Atari and

Intellivision games – you name the platform. The most interesting thing was *Touchdown Football* which, when the industry gave it a hard time, was later sold to Electronic Arts and eventually resurfaced as *Madden*. Since then I've worked on all sorts of new platforms: CD-i and most recently on the first round of 3DO products like *Shockwave*.

Then I came over to work with John, to help put together some of the ideas we hadn't explored fully in *Shockwave* and realise those fully in *Soviet Strike*."

Rod Swanson doesn't feel quite so qualified. "I'm kind of a rookie to the game industry. I've been at EA for four years and initially managed the artists here and helped start what we call our media lab, so I've been working with John and Michael for the past couple of years, aiding them on *Soviet Strike*." And lastly let us introduce Michael Kosaka, industry veteran and Electronic Arts stalwart. "I've been with EA for about nine years or so, going way back to the first C64 games; *Skeeter Dogs* was the first one I did and since then I've touched on just about everything else, from *Madden*, to *Lakers*, to I don't know what. I've been around for along time. Too long!"

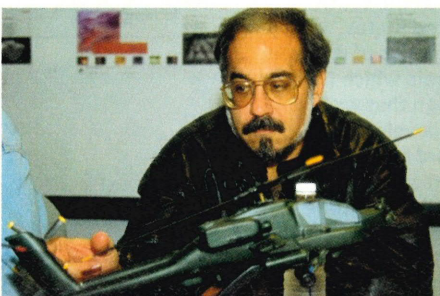
The four of them have been working on *Soviet Strike* for around two years, starting off with the initial design concept and progressing through to the actual coding. Between them they have almost forty years of game design experience, and backed by around fifty other programmers, artists and designers, *Soviet Strike* is one monster game. However, Electronic Arts always had a firm idea of how the end product would turn out. Surprisingly it was never going to be an identical 32bit brother of *Desert Strike*, although *Soviet Strike* still had to remain faithful to its predecessors. "It's not necessarily considered a sequel to the previous three games," reckons John. "What we've tried doing this time, moving onto the 32bit

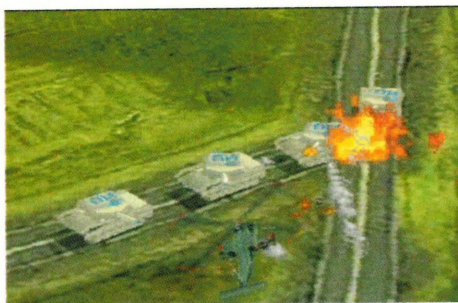
machines, was to sort of reinvent the *...Strike* property from this new higher-end world where you could put a lot more memory and information on CD. So what we tried to do was go back and look at what people liked about the previous Strike games, and to sort formulate that magic recipe that made *...Strike* such a popular series and to translate that over into the 32bit world. At the same time we wanted to take more advantage of what we can do with 32bit machines, giving you a more realistic experience, a richer environment to deal with."

"We actually spent a lot of time early on in the design process," Michael adds. "We tried to understand what were the essential characteristics of *...Strike*, and why it had been such a classic game, and recapture those and make sure they were in this product."

With the game nearing completion it looks as though the team has succeeded. However, was it a daunting prospect, updating a classic like *Desert Strike*? John considers this. "In a way there's a legacy to have to live up to, to the quality of the product you've done before. But I think the new machines have allowed us to actually have a lot more imagination – the imagination to be able to do a richer story and do a lot more with the game. A couple of the features we're putting in are an advanced artificial intelligence system, where you have enemy tanks that track you or when they get low on armour they suddenly become a scaredy-cat and run away, so there's a lot of enemy AI that we're going to be putting in it right now."

"The other thing is we have a larger team of programmers who each of whom come from a different background, so we have people who are experts in AI, or experts in video graphics. That sort of a team allows us to take what was fun about *...Strike* and take it the next level, to be able to do a lot of things we couldn't do on a 2Mb cartridge. I think we've held true to the legacy of what was popular about *Strike* but this larger team of experts has actually taken it far beyond where we ever thought we could go before. So I think we've done a pretty good job of living up to the expectations of the property." And who are we to disagree?





THERE ARE FIVE THEATRES OF WAR WHICH INCLUDE THE BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, AND EVEN TRANSYLVANIA!

RED SQUARE AT NIGHT, SHADOWMAN'S DELIGHT

The story behind *Soviet Strike* is a frighteningly realistic plot based around the current affairs in Russia. Although a completely fictional story was written specifically for the game many of the themes are based on real life. John explains. "It's sort of our worst fears come true, that there's someone pulling the strings, even today in the ex-Soviet Union's power structure, who's as clever and ruthless on the evil side as we felt Gorbachev was on the good side, and this is the character Strike has codenamed Shadowman. He's ex-KGB and what he has done is to help to facilitate the fall of democratic Russia since Gorbachev left power, and he's pretty much deliberately diverted

a lot of the roubles into Swiss bank accounts and is using that money to fund bogus wars of liberation around Eastern Europe. What Strike is trying to do is follow around behind these dictators, putting them out of business and prevent these situations from becoming public. In so doing it helps maintain democracy in Russia. However at a certain point, after a frustrating end to three of these attempts, he finally decides to divert the May Day parade in the heart of Moscow, surround the Kremlin and stage a full-blown coup. Strike goes in and tries to knock out television transmissions and clean up the mess, and must ultimately find the Shadowman and put him put of business." Phew!



IT'S AS EASY AS KGB

Although the concept behind *Soviet Strike* remains pretty much the same as the previous *...Strike* games, visually this PlayStation monster is a completely different bottle of vodka. For example, the background graphics are no longer bit-mapped, basic worlds but are now photorealistic 3D environments. As Michael explains, "The terrains are actually what most people are wowed by or impressed with when they first see the game. In the early design process we had artists working with us, experimenting how to achieve not just beautiful but accurate and plausible location terrains. So when we finally determined the ability to stream unique terrain and not just repeat cells, it got a lot of people excited and inspired. One of our art directors, who's also a pilot, went out and flew around most of the south-western United States, taking aerial photographs of different pieces of terrain which fitted in with the design that was currently being developed.

"So this hard research and process for creating our worlds is very much like the story, like the other parts of the game, based on reality and real-world textures. What happens then is

that our lead artists will take these aerial photographs and will recreate the game world map to look very much like a real location in the real world."

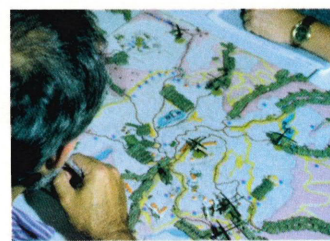
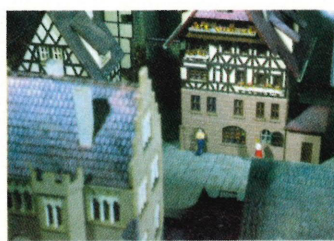
Although the result of this process are nothing short of stunning, actually producing them isn't all that easy. "These maps are huge", Michael continues. These texture-maps are very huge and unique. The artists that are working with them need something like 300Mbs of RAM to work and it's been a very unique process. In addition to creating the textures, there's also an elevation map that's part of the game design as well. The artists use the game map as a guide, then they'll illustrate the elevations by going through the process of finding the terrain pieces and reference material that fit that elevation. So, in the first level, in the Crimea valley where there's frozen lakes and rocky mountain peaks, there's actually

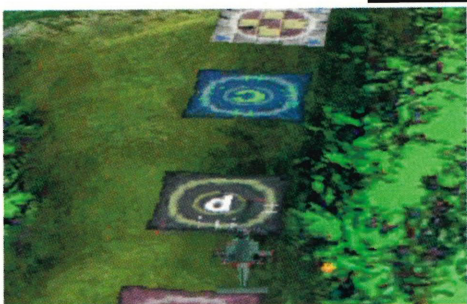
aerial photography of that kind of terrain that wraps over the appropriate elevation."

"That's another thing we've never had before in a *...Strike* game", John adds. "It was always a flat world with objects and structures. Now we have a complete 3D topography with mountains and valleys, dry rivers beds and canyons. All of those things we've always wanted to do, we can now have in this three-dimensional world."

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

With *Desert Strike* and indeed its two follow-ups, the team behind the *...Strike* trilogy were limited by the power of the 16bit machines. Now, with the advent of the PlayStation and 32bit technology, Electronic Arts has far more freedom to create whatever it likes. "We were actually able to try to create a lot of things we couldn't do before", John enthuses.

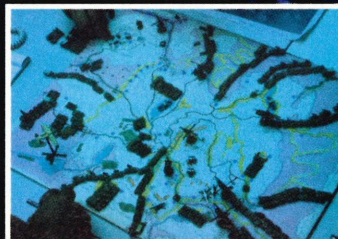
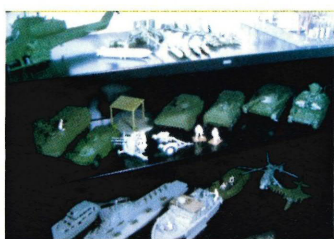




ROD SWANSON DETAILS HOW EACH LEVEL WAS MAPPED OUT BEFORE BEING COMPUTER GENERATED.

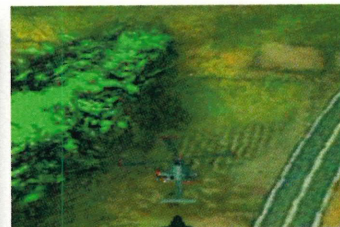
"Specifically, the amount of memory we had available meant that we could have a greater number of different, unique vehicles that we could put in the product, we could have more unique buildings that we could put in. The product is now completely 3D, so instead of a bitmapped world you actually fly around a 3D world. You can be in chase plane view going between buildings of a cityscape. That's something we've been able to do with 32bit technology – something like that allows us to have infinite number of frames of the chopper and how it flies through the world. So you're not limited to just 12 different views – with a 3D world you can have as many looks as you want. So we were able to make the ...*Strike* game we always wanted to make because of the extra processing power of the 32bit machines."

Adds Rod, "One of the characteristics of the early ...*Strikes*, that was so good was it was kinda based on a plausible



THE MOSCOW MULE

Of the first three ...*Strike* games, *Desert Strike* probably bears the closest resemblance to *Soviet Strike*. This not only because much of the action is set across sandy plains and third-world villages, but also because the players gets to pilot a single helicopter rather having the option to fly a stealth bombers, hovercraft or combat bikes as in *Jungle Strike*. "Soviet Strike has one vehicle that we're featuring, which is the Super Apache", affirms John. "We don't have multiple vehicles as in *Jungle Strike*, where you landed and transferred to another vehicle. We do have the ability to set the configuration of the chopper though, choosing a balanced weapons load with Chaingun, Hellfire and Hydra, or you can choose to have all Hydra rockets or all Hellfire missiles. You also have this fourth weapon which is the wingtip weapon, so on your wingtips you can put on a Sidewinder missile (which is heat-seeking), ECMs (which puts down a defensive chain to distract enemy weapons) or fuel pods (twice as much fuel) which, when empty, can be dropped like a bomb and causes a napalm-like explosion when it hits the ground. So the configuration gives you a lot more replayability for each level, by choosing one way or another."



RENDERED CUTSCENES HAVE BEEN USED THROUGHOUT TO ENHANCE ATMOSPHERE. HERE THE CHOPPER HAS JUST COLLECTED A WEAPONS SUPPLY CRATE.



premise, something that was drawn from the headlines as opposed to a real fantasy kinda thing. So the improved graphic resolution and the improved audio I think really played to the strengths of ...*Strike*'s identity and premise, so it became more realistic just as the story and the premise was generally a realistic kind of concept.

"Something else we were able to expand on was that we could give you a richer story, because we could include live actors and live video. We always tried to have some some story and plot lines in the previous ...*Strike* games, but we can really give you a more detailed story now that we have the ability to play full-motion video."

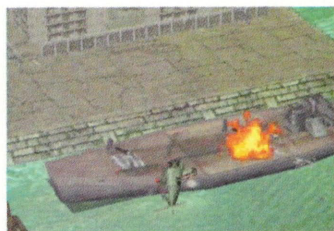
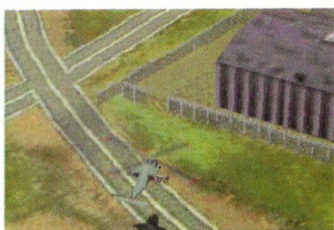
Full-motion video and rendered cutscenes play a big part in *Soviet Strike*, and although this is far from an interact movie the initial idea was to use these sequences to carry the plot. "When we were playing this product together", says Michael, "we wanted to put the player in the emotional situation

of being a member of Strike, feeling what it's like to do these things, and to get people as involved in the fantasy as possible. To do that one of the things we did on the video was to find real sets and locations this time, so everything about that, when it appears on the screen, is credible. Going over Eastern Europe to photograph the CNN news teams adds to that, getting a higher quality talent adds to that, the helicopter and carriers and various other things you'll see in the video help embellish that certain 'being part of a real situation that is going on', and hopefully that will add to the fun factor that much more."

BACK IN THE USSR Like *Desert, Jungle and Urban Strike*, *Soviet Strike* is constructed from a handful of scenarios, each divided in another dozen or so sub-missions.

"They'll be five basic parts of the world to go to," Michael confirms. "First you'll be going to Crimea, where you'll uncover the beginnings of this plot, and you're flying around essentially an alpine valley. Each location you go to will have about eight to ten missions, so in total they'll probably be about fifty missions to play. First you'll have about eight to ten in Crimea; mountain valleys, alpine situations. Then you'll go to the Black Sea to pro-





tect the hijacking of a naval base. You'll be dealing with large ships and missile frigates, things never seen before in the *...Strike* world. Then you'll be going from the Black Sea to the Caspian passes just south of Grosny, where there's a lot of mountain and desert terrain. It will remind people in some respects of *Desert Strike*, although the gameplay will be radically different to anything we've seen in the *...Strike* world before; much more a living battle, as formations of tanks move through the passes, similar to the Afghan wars. The fourth major location you'll go to is Transylvania. It'll feel kinda like a monster movie, where you have a Chernobyl-like leaking reactor, you have Serbian-like warlords fighting each other with Soviet equipment – *Strike* has to go in and deal with this whole mess. Then finally you'll

go to Moscow, flying around the heart of Moscow dealing with the KGB, the Russian Mafia and ultimately the Shadowman."

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE...

As well as using the power of 32bit technology to enhance the graphical presentation of the game, Electronic Arts is also working on a dramatically improved musical score, as John explains. "We have a higher quality level of music on 32bit machines. One of the really interesting things that we are doing is what we're calling ISM, which is an interactive music system. As you're flying around the world they are different music zone which we have created around each of the missions, that each have their own unique theme, so as you travel from one place to another you'll get a different music sound."

"But even more than that, the music is interactive with what's happening on the screen. So as you sneak into an enemy training camp you'll hear the slow roll of drums, the calm-before-the-storm sort of music, and then as the intensity of the game rises, the music likewise ramps up and reflects what's happening on the screen. As you start completing the mission the music starts calming down again."

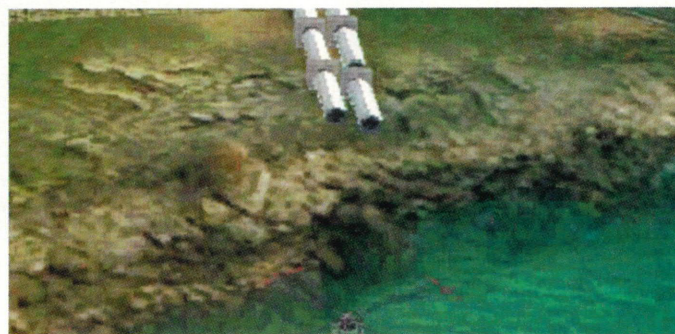


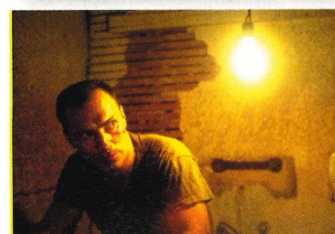
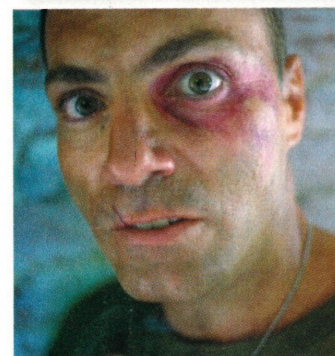
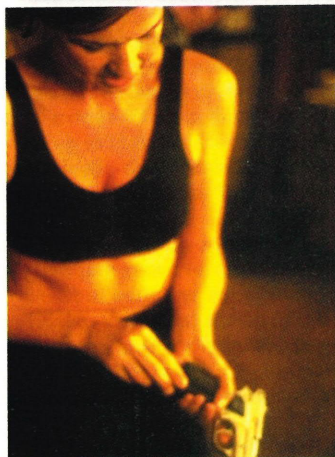
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Another area in which *Soviet Strike* remains faithful to its predecessors is the way each mission can be tackled. Although there is a set route to follow, it's possible actually branch and tackle the objectives in any order. While this can make the mission more difficult occasionally, it does enable the player to capture the enemy unaware, am-bushing the Shadowman rather than taking him on head-to-head. There are also smaller, almost hidden secrets to discover, as Michael reveals. "We've hidden, within the story, little mini-adventures that your co-pilot can do if you put them down in a certain place and they're allowed to go off. There's a finite level of things to be played around with too. For example, if you shot a certain building, guys will run out, start a truck and drive through a chain link fence before crashing off the road because they're going too fast. The game is packed with these little hidden sub-adventures that the human beings in the game are doing. These are also buried everywhere in each level."

John takes over. "We had a lot of the scenarios where chemical weapons plants were destroyed and news reporters were trapped in a Baghdad hotel. All of those things were design and then suddenly the Gulf war happened, and we started to watch the whole scenario unfold and realised it matched many of the missions that we created in the game. That's happened a number of times in the different *...Strike* games, so we're definitely on the pulse of what's happening in the political world."

Kosaka laughs. "I have a suspicion that John and Michael actually moonlight for the CIA!"





"It works interactively, very much like a movie is scored, except the player is controlling it. What you do affects how the music plays, whether it's intense or whether it's quiet."

MARK OUT OF TEN

As mentioned before, video footage is used through the game, both to explain the story but also to create a suitable atmosphere. Rod explains, "We've tried to really use the video appropriately for the game player, in a way that helps the player's experience. We also tried to create a stronger sense of identity for the Strike organisation and for your fellow Strike members as a player. Therefore you get to see and become somewhat familiar with some of the characters in the ...Strike universe. We tried to create some of the tension and adrenaline rush of combat and some of the complexity of the strategy and decision making, and mix that altogether with some computer graphics and live talent."

"One of the things consistent with the whole product design was to create a sense of plausibility and authenticity, so we used real actors, real sets, real locations. One of the things we wanted to do to stay true to that vision was shoot a lot of the video on location. One character, Andrea, who travels around



"WANNA BUY A SCUD, LITTLE BOY?"

for Strike on location, was all shot in Prague to capture that authentic location. We used a lot of the film crew who worked on *Mission: Impossible* who were over there, and I've noticed that several of the locations we used are beginning to show up in television commercials.

"But one of the real objectives we were trying to deal with the video in *Soviet Strike* was to sort of create a new style of video story telling for these high-action games. We we're describing it as sort of a CNN meets MTV, where you have that sort of fast-paced MTV look but you also have what feels real and legitimate about news. We're trying to mix those two together in the video and

hopefully it'll be a unique kind of story telling when you see it in the product."

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Thankfully the player doesn't face the Shadowman alone, as they're accompanied by a co-pilot who handles all the menial tasks such as raising and lowering the winch for refuelling. "Each level you generally have a different co-pilot that works with you," explains Kosaka. "He'll either be someone that's there to help you rescue people, or there are levels where you drop the co-pilot off, and then he goes off and does a sub-mission to help you on the ground. As an example, he might get into a different vehicle and drive off to create a diversion while you to attack an enemy, or he might run into a building and set a bomb. There's a number of things that we have where the co-pilot actually goes off and does some good while you're covering for him in the chopper."

"We've been able to create very rich co-pilot characters in each level. It's kinda like each time you meet a new co-pilot it's like a different buddy movie. You get to work with them in each level, and we have an international cast of co-pilots. Each one has adds little experiences to the kinds of clues he'll give you as you're flying around each world."

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The Mechanical Age



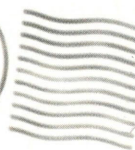
The Selenitic Age



The Channelwood Age

Are you still there?
This island is so calm, it seems
to whisper... but the meaning of
the words is hidden...
There are secrets and books, and
imprisoned brothers who insist
on sharing their grief...
Will you ever help me leave?
Will you help me escape the
four ages of Myst?
Then one day, I can be with
you in the turning of a page...
Thinking of you...

Amber



My friend
Beyond the Island
The other side of the Ocean
This World
(or another...)

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COMPANY	GT
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	£44.95
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	BEAT 'EM UP

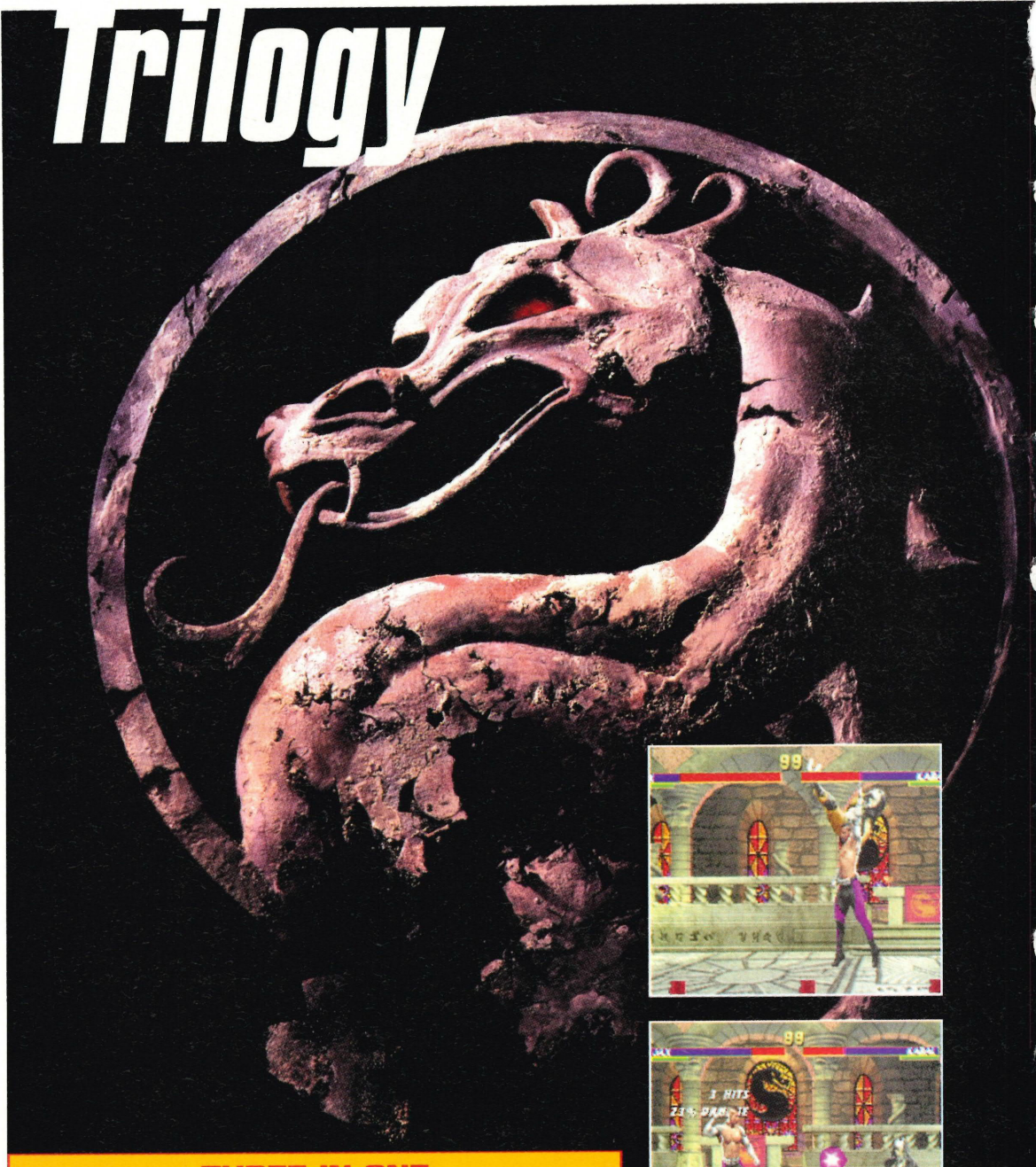


uring the brief 16bit hey-day, one game reigned supreme:

Capcom's *Street Fighter*. Nothing, it seemed, could usurp Capcom's World Warriors from their premier position, and no sooner had the original been converted to home formats, than two slightly updated sequels appeared. Sadly, the difference between the consecutive cartridges was minimal, and after a year of such sequels Capcom's crown was up for grabs. Coincidentally, Williams' *Mortal Kombat* was rapidly worming its way into the arcade-going public's affections.

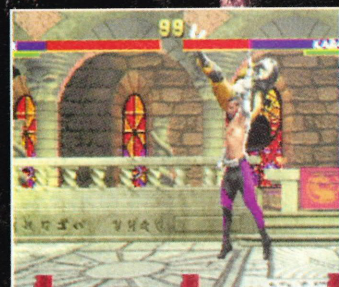
To be frank, the first *Mortal Kombat* was no great shakes. Graphically, the digitised sprites were lacking, and there were only seven characters which reduced its lasting appeal and variety. Nevertheless, the Americans went ape for it, and the sequel emerged surrounded by more hype than any of the *Street Fighter* games experienced. Developers Ed Boon and John Tobias expanded the original in every area: more characters, secret bonuses, and the much-touted 'Fatality' moves of the first game were made bloodier than ever. *Mortal Kombat II* was a phenomenal success – and Acclaim's 16bit conversions grossed more than any other carts they had released at the time. A third game was just a matter of time, and the *Mortal Kombat* bandwagon was seemingly unstoppable. Sony's new PlayStation was the first machine to benefit from a conversion, and such was the series' popularity that Acclaim were planning a conversion of *Mortal Kombat II* for the Sony machine. But then, just after Sony launched the third game in the series, GT Interactive entered a deal with Williams which guaranteed first dibs on any future product. In addition to *Doom* and *Final Doom*, this also included a mysterious title called *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*. No sooner had the story broken than the letters started pouring in. 'Could you play all of the characters from every game?', 'Was Smoke in it?', and the perennial *Mortal Kombat* question 'Can you be the boss?' The answer to each of these questions is yes – but to sum *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* up so briefly is do it a massive disservice...

Mortal Kombat Trilogy



THREE IN ONE

Quite simply, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* is the answer to fans of the series' prayers. Virtually every character from the three games is represented, while backdrops selected from the trio are used to provide the scenery. However, not content with pitting virtually ever character against the rest – including *all* the hidden foes from the series and the boss characters, not to mention a couple whose existence was unsubstantiated rumour – where applicable Williams have added two versions of the same character. Sub-Zero in *Mortal Kombat 3*, for example, underwent a huge make-over in order to differentiate him from the similarly-clad Smoke, Rain, Scorpion and Reptile sprites. For *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, though, both sprites put in an appearance, with Smoke and his update also receiving the same treatment – while the likes of Sonya Blade and Kano (both of whom debuted in the first game) are represented by their *Mortal Kombat 3* sprites as the only major difference between the two sprites is better clarity of those in *Mortal Kombat 3*. Purists will be pleased to note, however, that both retain a full set of moves from both games.



WE COULD BE HEROES

Rumours regarding hidden characters in the *Mortal Kombat* series have fuelled many a night for devout Internet users. The first game was rumoured to allow the user to play Shang Tsung, the first game's boss. While Reptile appeared only as a background sprite in *Mortal Kombat II*, Noob Saibot (the words Boon and Tobias spelt backwards) was the game's only true hidden sprite. The developers kept constant note of such stories, and for the third game stories of a character called Ermac (a named derived from an error message shown when the coin-op crashed!), along appeared as people desperately searched for more hidden characters and ways to play as the game's bosses. *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*'s character select screen thus contains virtually every sprite the three games has featured. From the first game, Sonya, Kano and Johnny Cage take a bow, while Baraka, Mileena, Kitana and Kintaro are among those offering their services. While a new version of Sub-Zero, Motaro and Jade are present as part of the *Mortal Kombat 3* party. In all, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* offers thirty-two characters the majority of which are equipped with a wealth of special moves and finishing moves. But no, before we start getting letters, what you see is what you get. There are no more hidden characters.



We're probably teaching our grandmothers to suck eggs here, but the majority of characters in *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* are armed with fancy finishing moves to further the loser's humiliation. Each fight takes place using the 'best-of-three' approach. On clinching the second victo-



FATALITY: Inflicts one of a number of gory deaths on to the loser. The fighters capable of fatalities are equipped with two each, and these include decapitations, skin removal and frequent use of explosives – and virtually all shower the victor in a wave of bones as they celebrate cementing their supremacy.



FRIENDSHIP: Even more charitable than the Babality. Friendships allow the user to demonstrate good grace by giving a peace offering to the swaying loser. Again, the block button must not be used in the second round.



AS WITH PAST GAMES IN THE SERIES, A HIGH QUOTA OF GORE IS INCLUDED.



ry, though, a gruff digitised voice prompts the player to 'Finish Him!' (or her), and veteran *Mortal Kombat*ers will begin pushing the Dpad and buttons in every direction in the hope of pulling off one of the game's infamously grisly death moves or niceties, which are as follow:



BABALITY: Rather than disembowelling the loser, a more charitable winner may opt to reduce them back to infancy. Babalities may only be effected if the block button is used in the final round.



MERCY: In preparation for the ultimate humiliation, using a Mercy adds extra energy to the loser's power bar, giving them a few extra seconds fighting. Mercies are only achievable if the battle is spread across three rounds, though.



ANIMALITY: The hardest moves to pull off, and a perfect example of a rumour becoming reality. Boon and Tobias added Animalities after a rumour started that they were in *Mortal Kombat II*. Animalities can only be used after a Mercy has been performed, but the result is extremely pleasing.



PICTURESQUE

Not content with cramming the thirty-two sprites into the game, Williams have also endeavoured to cram every backdrop from the first three games into *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*. As such, *Mortal Kombat II* sprites such as Baraka and Mileena could find themselves slugging it out in *Mortal Kombat 3*'s roof garden, while Shao Kahn faces Motaro against his palatial backdrop from the first game. The benefit of the full monty of backdrops, though, is that they open up extra secrets. The second game was the first to add pit Fatalities wherein a special sequence of moves in a key location could uppercut the loser into an acid pit or impale them on a spiked ceiling. *Mortal Kombat 3*, however, went one better, with the addition of an extra level of depth to the backdrops, which allowed players to uppercut their foe through the ceiling or even in front of a tube train.



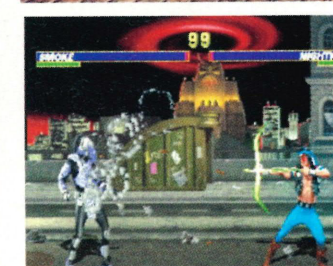
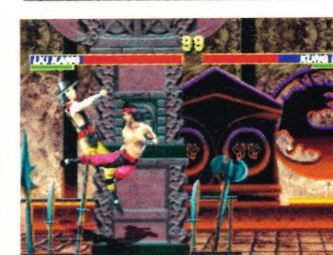
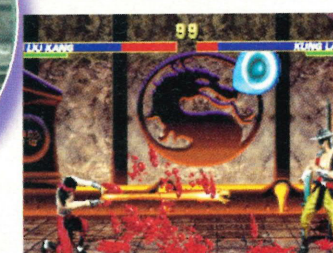
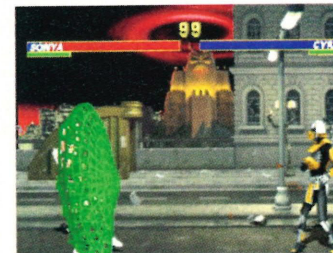
THE SPECIAL MOVES ARE EFFECTED VIA COMBINATIONS OF D-PAD MANIPULATION AND FRANTIC PRESSES OF THE FACIA BUTTONS. THE HARDER TO EFFECT, THOUGH, THE MORE VISUALLY AND PHYSICALLY STRIKING.

NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE

In addition to the grisly Fatalities and assorted finishing moves, each of the thirty-two Kombatants comes prepared for battle with five or six special moves for use during the battle itself. Just as *Street Fighter* and its many sequels offered the user the chance to pull off fireballs and gravity-defying kicks, so *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* goes one better, with sprites that can render themselves invisible, use their hair to whip people, lob a grenade, or freeze them to the spot using an icy torrent. Die-hard *Mortal Kombat* fans who have encountered the previous games will be instantly at home with the D-pad manipulations needed to effect the moves, but even they will need to put in a great deal of practice as bosses such as Goro, Shao Kahn and Motaro are available to control for the first time, alongside the likes of Rain and Ermac who are making their first appearances in any of the games.

ALL AGAINST ALL

In the spirit of a WWF tag team battle, Williams have added a series of multiple character rumbles for the discerning kombatier. The main menu allows the user to opt for a straight fight through the ranks of the thirty-two characters, or pitch themselves against a mate or the CPU in mano et mano bouts, or anything up to four sprites a side. The battles are fought individually, with each character's health reduced with every hit. However, if one of the sprites is defeated, the winner remains to take on the next entrant — but with his energy at the same depleted level. If the marathon Fatality session proves too much, though, a more sedate two-on-two mode is also on offer.



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**Time Commando available
this Summer on PlayStation and PC CD.**

DOS &
WINDOWS
95



COMPANY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	SEPTEMBER
PRICE	£44.95
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	ACTION/PLATFORM



Once upon a time, comic books were considered something juvenile, something to be avoided and mocked. Any kid sitting in your schoolroom reading Spider-Man or Batman was a bit of a nerdy, while you sat and poured over *Roy of the Rovers* or *Valiant*. Then one day, after twenty years over being an 'underground subculture', comics grew up. In the short space of a month or two, Frank Miller and Klaus Jansson delivered their Batman opus *The Dark Knight Returns* (without which, we'd never have got the movies) while Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons went overboard with their retro-thriller *Watchmen*. Suddenly comics were hot, featuring in *The Sunday Times* news pages and open to the real world rather than just the geeks.

Ten years later and much of that floodwater has subsided. Small independent publishers came and went, each determined to put the "big two" corporations (ie Marvel and DC) out of business. None succeeded, although a few made some good inroads. 1996 offers the comic reader a situation very different from 1986 and completely unrecognisable from 1976. But still hanging on in there are Marvel's basic stable of heroes, spawned between 1961 and 1965, the company's so-called silver age. Iron Man is one of them.

X-O Manowar, however, is a completely different kettle of fish. Valiant Comics, who publish his adventures, was one of those companies which wanted to see Marvel ground down. It failed, went through some changes, revitalised by Acclaim (hence Acclaim Comics, of which Valiant now appears to be a subsidiary). Pairing these two characters up for a game is an odd move. Neither are exactly top selling or bursting with customer identification. The average person in the street might know that Spider-Man or the Hulk are Marvel characters, but Iron Man? Nevertheless, teamed up they are for this platformer-come-shoot 'em up, fighting a variety of Marvel and Valiant bad guys.

Iron Man X-O Manowar: Heavy Metal



POW!

One of the greatest things about comic-book stories is the unlimited scope for impossible plots. *Iron Man/X-O Manowar: Heavy Metal* the game has embraced this concept wholeheartedly, as you battle through the evil minions of Crescendo and Dromak in an attempt to prevent the Cosmic Cube from falling into their hands. One of the

most powerful, sentient objects in the cosmos, the Cube holds the power to remake the Universe and everything within it, giving it's holder infinite capacity for peace or destruction. Guess which one Crescendo wants to cause...



WALLOP!

In classic platform shooter style there are loads of bonus health, weapons and extras to be found along the way. Mastering the special shoot move that lets you blast at the scenery behind you can help a lot with this as many hidden extras can be found there. It's also a good idea to keep on firing at your enemies dead body. Not only does this result in a most satisfactory explosion of flying body-parts, but some of the best weapons power-ups can be found in this way.



THWACK!



KER-BLOWIE!

Iron Man was one of Marvel Comics' very first superheroes, way back in the early Sixties. Millionaire playboy Tony Stark was selling arms in Korea when he crossed an enemy warlord and was shot at for his trouble. Although helped by an oriental scientist, a piece of shrapnel was lodged by his heart, threatening his life. The scientist devised an armoured fighting suit for him, enabling Stark to escape home where, after many costume refinements, he became known as Iron Man, a member of the New York based supergroup, the Mighty Avengers.

Stark also built up his own industrial company, becoming one of the world's leading technological geniuses.

X-O Manowar however, is a

There's seven manic levels to battle your way through, each with their own objective.

ST. PAULS NUCLEAR PLANT

Mister Hyde and the Melter have sabotaged the power plant and placed it on the verge of full-scale nuclear meltdown. You must battle through Spider Aliens and Armormen in a race to save the plant.

STARK ENTERPRISES

Crescendo intends to use the new vibranium drill for her evil purposes. Bash your way through Spider Aliens, Dromak Privates and Yellow Jacket to thwart her deadly plans.

NEW YORK CITY

Reclaim the streets of New York City while avoiding the attentions of the Spider Aliens and Crescendo Guards – oh, and the nuclear warheads are best avoided too.

RAIN FORREST & VOLCANO

Slash past hordes of Spider Aliens and Armormen to find and destroy the mighty Absorbing Man and ultimately defeat the Helicopter Gun ship.

ISLE OF EXILES

The objective here is to shut down the drill and enter the mine shaft where Mistress Crescendo and Dromak are lurking. In here you'll find all manner of hideous bio-servants that need putting out of their misery.

DRILL PLATFORM

Defeat Blackout who guards the anteroom that hides the Cosmic Cube. This will be far from easy and once done you still have to face Crescendo and Dromak before they can use the Cube.

DROMAK SHIP

The final confrontation. Locate the throne room where you finally get your hands on the Cube. But before you can restore the Universe to normality you must defeat Crescendo and Dromak.

different kettle of fish. A recent creation by Valiant Comics, his background is as an ancient Briton, fighting the scourge that was the Roman Empire. He discovered the X-O Manowar armour in a hidden cave but on donning it, was kidnapped by the extraterrestrial Spider Aliens, returned 1500 years later to help fight crime.

Marvel and Valiant have teamed up to produce a two-issue mini-series (one per company) expanding upon the premise of

this game, featuring an attempt to rescue the Cosmic Cube, a powerful artifact that has caused the two alternate universes to merge – and leaving it up to Iron Man and X-O Manowar to put their respective realities back on the right track.



PREVIEW



BOING!

The Marvel and Valiant comic villains are out in force here, leaping into action from the pages of the dusty comics hidden beneath our beds. Dozens of them make special guest appearances as either sub level or end of level bosses. Here's the low down on just a few of them...

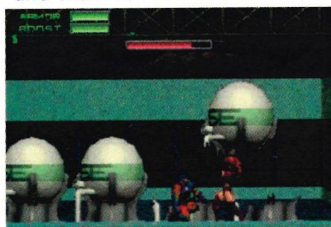
ABSORBING MAN

He has the ability to absorb the properties of objects about him. This can be a right bugger as kicking seven bells out of a column of water will get you nothing but a wet foot.



TITANIA

Absorbing man's wife – and she's tough. I guess that's why her husband carries the ball and chain about with him.



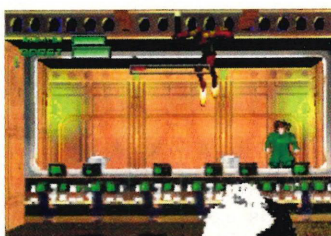
GOLIATH

He used to be one of Baron Zemo's henchmen, until he gained super-powers and got the taste for destruction.



MISTER HYDE

This lunatic doctor has become permanently trapped in his evil persona. He has a great dress sense though.



YELLOW JACKET

This vixen in yellow stole her super powers from a hero. She has the ability to shrink right down which makes her very hard to target.

ZAP!

You are given the choice of playing as either Iron Man or X-O Manowar in your fight against the dark forces of the world. There's little difference in their performance overall, except perhaps for the colour of their blasters and the style of their kick/punch moves. Both super heroes have the ability to boost into flight for a limited period of time and, as well as the background shot, a double tap down on the direction pad before firing will send fireballs spinning out to either side of you – very handy when you're completely surrounded by blood-thirsty mutants. Picking up the special power-ups will give you a double and even a triple laser shot which is extremely useful when it comes to getting past the over-head gun turrets. No super hero game would be complete without the 'cosmic blast' and *Iron Man/X-O Manowar: Heavy Metal* isn't lacking in that department, though it's a good idea to reserve these for use on the Bosses, who are very tough indeed.



AN IMPRESSIVE FELLA, THAT X-O. EXAMINE THE HEROES STATS AND DECIDE WHICH ONE TO TAKE FOR A SPIN. THERE'S NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE IN PERFORMANCE, SO IT ALL COMES DOWN TO YOUR TASTE IN ARMOUR.



HMM... ANYONE FANCY A BARBECUE? THERE ARE SOME GREAT TOUCHES IN THE ANIMATION WITH EXPLODING BODIES AND BLAZING TORSOS.

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE!! YOU WANNA HOPE YOUR BOOSTER SHOES DON'T RUN OUT OF STEAM OVER THIS LOT!



ARNIM ZOLA

Originally a genetic engineer for Hydra, Arnim Zola suffered from a disfiguring disease and so installed himself in an android body.

BLACKOUT

Another ex-thug of Zemo who has branched out on his own. Sad, bad and totally mad...



ZOLA'S FREAKS

Genetic freaks created by the mad scientist. Get too close and they'll confuse your senses with a sonic beam, changing the action of all the buttons on your keypad.



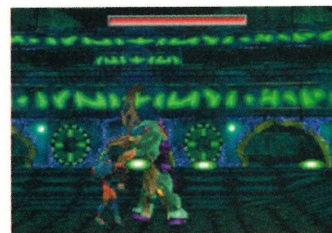
DROMAK PRIVATE

Reporting directly to Dromak, these metal menaces are harbingers of destruction – and you can never find a can-opener when you need one.



DROMAK

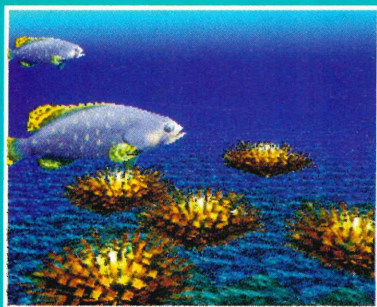
The ultimate Warrior. This demon in armour wants to use the Cube for his evil ways – it's up to you to stop him.



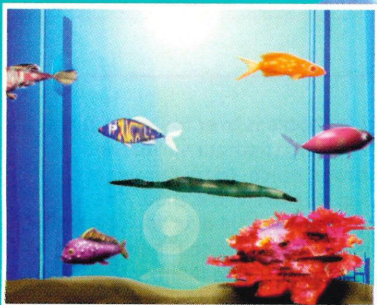
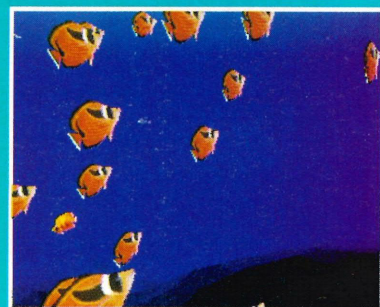
MISTRESS CRESCENDO

She might look like a bit of a fox, but this is one lady you do not want to be messing with.

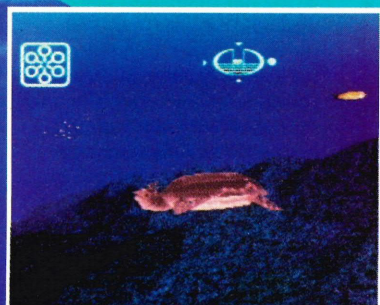




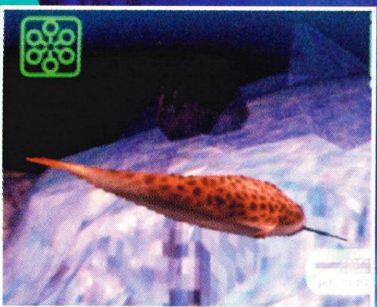
**MISSILES?
NO.**



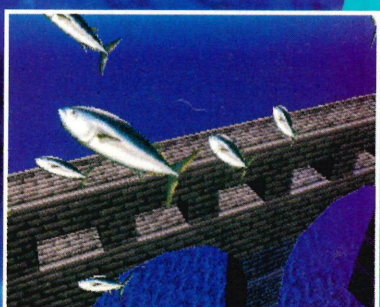
**GUNS?
NO.**



**FIGHTING?
NO.**



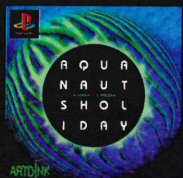
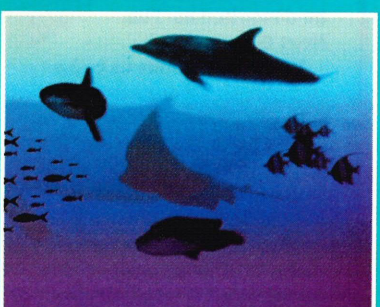
**BLOOD?
NO.**



**GUTS?
NO.**



**MACKEREL?
YES.**



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DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

SONY





COMPANY	VIRGIN
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	£44.95
PLAYERS	1-4
GENRE	PLATFORM



here's no doubting that Bub and Bob have hit the PlayStation with a vengeance.

Following a ten-year period of obscurity, the pair's history has been updated in 32bit conversions of *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands* and *Bust-A-Move*. Now, in an annals-retentive manner normally only associated with continuity-obsessed *Star Trek* fans, the order these games run can be listed as follows: Bub and Bob's parents are kidnapped and the pair are transformed into dinosaurs by Baron Von Blubba and the *Bubble Bobble* (1982) adventure begins. Before they are reverted to their human form, though, the bubbling Brontosauri find time to star in *Bust-A-Move 1* (1994) and *Bust-A-Move 2* (1996). At long last, the pair revert to their original dungaree-wearing forms in time for the seven-stage *Rainbow Islands* (1986) and *Rainbow Islands Enhanced* (1996), but abandon rainbow-producing skills for fancy umbrella-waving abilities in *Parasol Stars* (1991). By now, Bub and Bob were past their best, and became family men producing a number of kids who, in turn, produced grandchildren. Now, in keeping with the *Star Trek* analogy, we come to *Bubble Bobble 2* (1996) — which could almost be described as 'The Next Generation.'

While it ashamed us to be so pedantic, there's no doubting that the *Bubble Bobble* heritage is a fine one, and one that is set to continue in Virgin's conversion of the little-seen sequel to *Bubble Bobble* (known in some circles as *Bubble Symphony*). Following the principle that a good sequel is one that expands upon the original in every way, *Bubble Bobble 2* not only drops descendants of our established dino<None>-buddies into more levels of bubbling action, but also gives them two mates for an all-new four-player mode, and the option of selecting a number of routes for a little variety in the long journey to freedom.

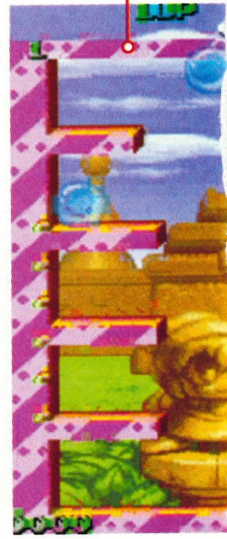
BUBBLE BOBBLE 2

BUBBLE POWER



The original *Bubble Bobble* is over fourteen years old and plays host to eight-colour sprites and matt-black backdrops which, to be fair, were considered state-of-the-art at the time. The sequel, however, benefits from over ten years of hardware advancement, and while the decoratively-platformed stages will be familiar to fans of the series, the backdrops and general enhancements give *Bubble Bobble 2* the look of a 32bit game. Every aspect of the graphics has been given a lick of paint, with more detailed versions of the old sprites — cowed rock-rollers, the blue ghosts and the cuboid robots, for example — mingling with all-new characters, while the level design is generally more intricate, necessitating more skill from the player and more creative use of bubble ledges and the game's four-player co-operation opportunities. Taito have also plundered their arcade game archives, and *Bubble Bobble 2* features cameo appearances from characters from past games, including a few from *New Zealand Story*, for example.

BUBBLE BOBBLE 2 OFFERS FAR MORE IN THE SECRET BONUS DEPARTMENT THAN ANY OTHER IN THE SERIES.



THE BACKDROPS ARE TYPICALLY CUTESY, AND ARE THEMED AROUND FRUIT, TELEVISION, AND STEAM TRAINS.





TRAPPING THE END-OF-LEVEL BOSS REQUIRES GREAT DEXTERITY AND TIMING, AS THEY MOVE AROUND THE SCREEN AT A TERRIFIC PACE.



MANY HANDS...



MAGICAL POWERS

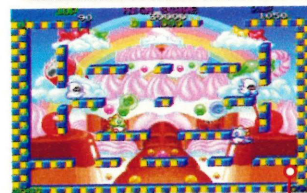
As before our heroes' powers can be supplemented by collecting the assorted power-ups and icons which appear randomly. Hardy perennials from the first game, such as the lightning bolt and fire bubbles, have made a welcome come-back, with the former proving essential for defeating the game's bosses, while the latter kill anything they come into contact with. The all-important new additions to the power-up collection are yellow bubble gum, which enhances the speed of the bubbles, purple gum to extend their range, and blue gum which offers a mixture of the two. The rest of the power-ups are also a mixture of the old and the new, with red shoes making the owner fleet of foot, clocks freezing the enemies, coloured crosses which allow the recipient to produce fireballs, while trophies endow the collector with every power-up or a handy smart bomb. The arrival of a new power-up is hinted at by the tolling of a bell, and they then remain in the player's possession until a life is lost.



AND FINALLY



Once inside the magic world created by the spell book, the mission becomes one of escape. As our scaly heroes bounce and bubble their way across the levels, their path is often blocked as one of the bosses puts in an appearance. These huge sprites take the form of one of the many aliens the pair encounter, and bounce off the walls in pursuit of our heroes. Normal bubbling has no effect on the bosses, but each boss stage is normally brimming with lightning or fire bubbles, and these are either fired at or dropped on to the overgrown baddies until they are finally encapsulated in a suitably large bubble. Popping the bubble then sends them flying off screen and players are duly rewarded with huge bonuses and power-ups for their trouble.



A HOST OF FAMILIAR FACES
FROM THE FIRST GAME RETURN
IN AN ENHANCED FORM.



ROUTEMASTER

Bubble Bobble followed a linear route, with the pair starting at the top of a stack of one hundred levels and working their way down. In a nod to *Parasol Stars*, the sequel scrolls sideways, with the single-screen levels shifting off-screen to reveal the next location. In all, *Bubble Bobble 2* contains over one hundred screens, but the route to the final boss can be chosen via a series of warp gates. Having cleared a number of screens, our bubbling buddies are offered a choice of routes, each of which is individually named and follows a different graphical theme. Developers East Point have also recreated the many bonus rooms and hidden features in Taito's original, and the aforementioned warp gates allow the user to double back on themselves to collect anything they may have missed.

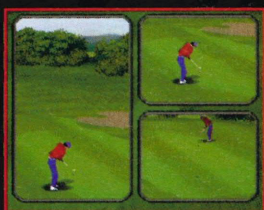


Bring golf to the
fore on Saturn
and PlayStation...

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"The best golf game ever"

PlayStation Plus



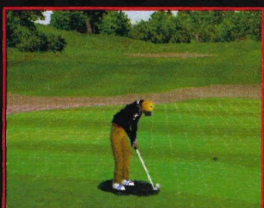
9 out of 10 "The best golf game
on the PlayStation so far"

PSX Pro



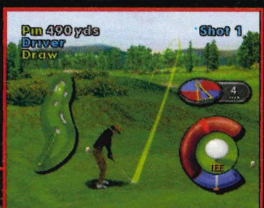
90% "If you want a golf game for
your PlayStation, look no further
than this"

Mean Machines PlayStation



4 out of 5 "The best PlayStation
golf game"

C&VG



8 out of 10. PlayStation
Star Player Award

Official PlayStation Magazine



Coming Soon

actua
SPORTS
SERIES





COMPANY	GTI
RELEASE	TBA
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-2 (LINK-UP)
GENRE	SHOOT 'EM UP



One of the most frequently used phrases in our previews and reviews is to refer to a game as something of a *Doom*-clone. *Alien Trilogy*, *Hexen*, *POed*, *Exhumed* – all have fallen into that category to some extent. Now here comes the ultimate *Doom* clone – *Final Doom*. Purporting to be the last word in the series, the use of non-storylined games and adapted amateur Internet wads would suggest that nothing should really be considered final. Just ask Freddy Kruegger. Nevertheless, for the moment this is the last *Doom* game we're likely to see on the PlayStation, with around fifty new levels to either shoot demons on or, if you've the extra PlayStation and disc, Deathmatch around. Plus there's a promise of some (possibly more than last time) hidden levels à la last time's *The Mansion* and *Club Doom*, this adds up to a package as weighty and value for money looking as the original. And at least these won't have been around on the PC for a couple of years first.

But do we need another version of *Doom*? What can this offer that the first didn't? After all, the weapons are the same. The bad guys are the same and despite geographic differences, so is the basic topography. Ultimately, it brings up the equation of why there were half a dozen *Police Academy* films or *Pink Panther* movies, people like more of the same. To take the analogy further – the characters and situations are the familiar, but the script and resolutions are slightly different.

The challenges in *Final Doom* are probably familiar but the order in which they are played makes them sufficiently different to be worth a look. Ultimately, *Final Doom* seems to be more of a second chapter than a sequel, but whatever it is, if you enjoyed *Doom*, this promises to be just as pleasurable an experience.



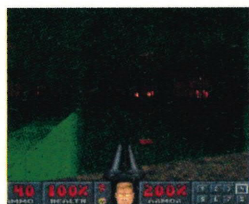
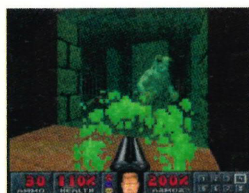
OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE,
THEY JUST
BLOOD THIRST

Final Doom



PREVIEW

MUTANT ZOMBIES.



BEHIND EVERY GOOD CACODEMON, THEIR LURKS ANOTHER, JUST WAITING UNTIL YOU PAUSE FOR BREATH BEFORE SPLATTERING YOU INTO LITTLE GUNKY BITE-SIZE CHUNKS.

WADS OF DEATH

As a bonus to the two main games are the *Master Levels* – more than a dozen areas of mass death and destruction, including such exotic sounded places as *Fistula*,

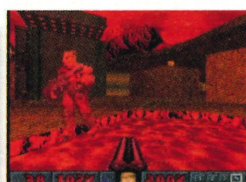
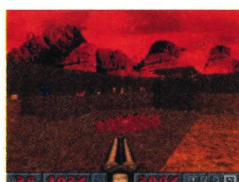
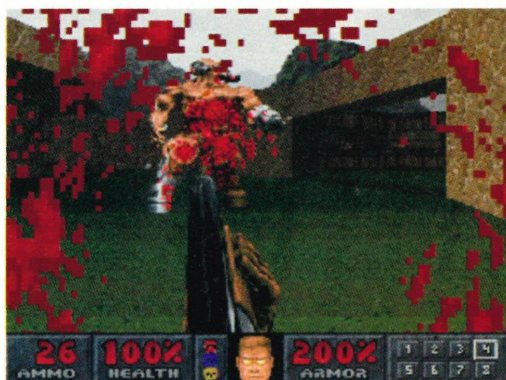
Paradox, *Subspace* and *Vesperas*.

This have been put together as difficult levels by both id and a few individuals who created their own *Doom* levels via the Internet. These wads have been adapted by id into 'official' *Doom* levels now and easily rank amongst the hardest of the lot.

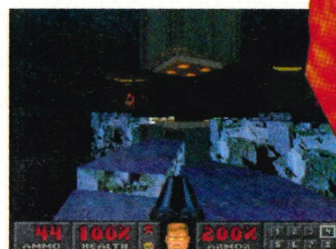
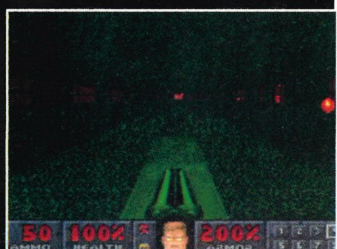
Ever since *Doom* hit the PC, gamers around the world have been creating their own episodes and scenarios via the 'net. Apart from the *Doom* demons, wads have been available featuring smiley faces, Homer Simpson, Daleks and even Elvis Presley who, upon killing you, mumbles in true King style "Thankyouverymuch".

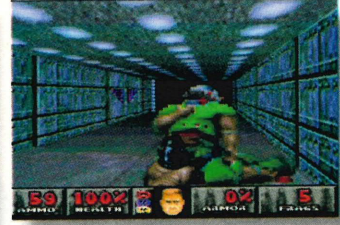


THE NEW BREED



Whereas *Doom* for the PlayStation was separated into *Doom II* and *Ultimate Doom*, *Final Doom* is in three sections. The first section of 32 levels is known as *TNT* – originally entitled *Evolution*. Amongst the levels therein are *Wormhole*, *Nukage Processing*, *Ballistyx*, *Quarry* (for those of you expecting shades of *Doctor Who* and *Blake's 7* with that name, fear not) and, best sounding of all, *Human Barbecue*. The second collection of 32 levels are collected together as *Plutonia* (or *The Plutonia Experiment*) and feature such wonderful torture zones as *Ghost Town*, *Baron's Lair*, *The Death Domain* and the final game, *Onslaught*.





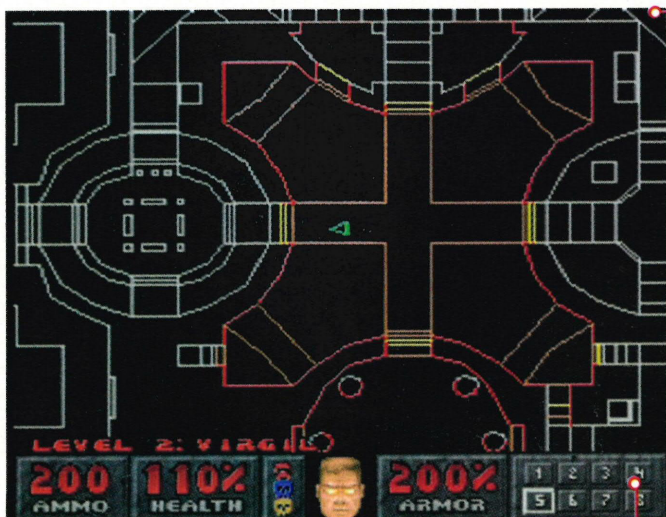
TWO'S COMPANY

Once again a link-up cable between two PlayStations and two copies of *Final Doom* enable players to play either Cooperative against the demon hordes or the ever-popular Deathmatch. Don't expect any quick battles though – unlike many of the levels in *Doom*, the Deathmatches in *Final Doom* are large sprawling affairs with the two players initially spread far apart, needing to use just as much skill and fast moving to find the weapons and hidden rooms as in the normal gameplay.

SIZE IS EVERYTHING



One of the most immediately noticeable aspects of *Final Doom* is that while the gameplay is pretty much the same, everything is bigger and badder. Even when played on one of the easier settings, such as Not Too Rough, the player is immediately greeted with Revenants and Hell Knights. The original PlayStation *Doom* slowly built up from a few soldiers, then Imps, Lost Souls etc, but *Final Doom* throws you in at the deep end, ill-armed and relying on your wits and skill, especially on the *Master Levels*. The quantity of monsters and size of the levels are much higher than original *Doom* as well. Another thing original *Doom* allowed to grow as it went along was the complexity of puzzles, traps and hidden doors and passages. Not so *Final Doom*. Working on the (quite understandable) assumption that if you got to *Redemption* in *Doom*, you are well versed with the twists and turns that made those latter levels such fun and hard work, so the first few *TNT* don't hold back. Just take a look at the maps (and yes, the same cheats to get maps, weapons and keys work here as they did on *Doom*) and you'll see how sprawling a majority of the Levels are. *Wormhole* in particular is beautifully deceptive, but for those of you who prefer not to cheat, then picking a level like *Minos* and working your way through it is enormous fun.



MANY LEVELS IN FINAL DOOM FEATURE SMALL ROOMS WITH LOTS OF DOORS OPENING INTO OTHER, LARGER, ROOMS WITH LOTS OF DOORS LEADING TO...

VIRGIL IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF INTRICATE, AND FREQUENTLY IDENTICAL, CORRIDORS MAKING FOR GOOD GAMEPLAY.

THE END ...?

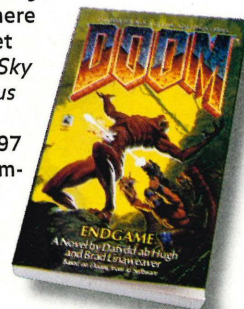
Once again, when *Onslaught* has been played through, you get another congratulatory message, telling you that basically, you've beaten all the bad guys; those familiar with *Doom* will know what to expect. *Final Doom* ends with a demonic warning about what you'll need, should you ever end up in Hell again. Well, a BFG might be useful, but nevertheless, it does hint that there may be more to come. Is this truly the end? Is this absolutely *Final Doom*? Only id know for sure...



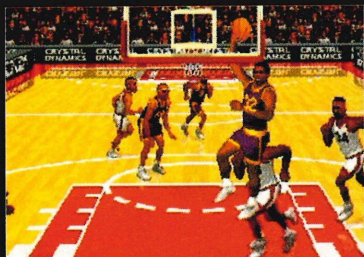
FINAL DOOM FEATURES A LOT OF THIN WALKWAYS, REQUIRING TRICKY MANOEUVRING.

FRANCHISE OF DOOM

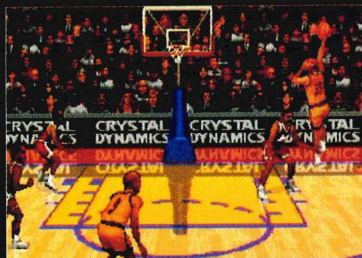
Latterly on the PlayStation, all things *Doom* have been getting bigger and bigger. Few games spawn quite as much interest as *Doom* has – some games dealers are charging as much for the *Doom* promotional materials (counter stands, full-size CyberDemons etc) as they did for the game. *Final Doom* is just as likely to encourage high (if rather unethical) spending. On top of this, there are the on-going series of novels published by Pocket Books: *Knee Deep in the Dead*, *Hell on Earth*, *Infernal Sky* and recently *Endgame* (see Issue 11 of *PlayStation Plus* for a review). But by far the most eagerly awaited development is the *Doom* movie, mooted for a late '97 release. With the technology available to today's filmmakers, the visualisation of seeing "Our Hero" up against lifesize CyberDemons, Spider thingies and floating Cacodemons ought to be extraordinary.



"This fastpaced, first-person basketball sim does a phenomenal job of bringing players into the action."
—NEXT Generation magazine



Franchise player mode lets you abuse opponents like they were players for an expansion team. Control Magic, Kareem, or Anyone thru a 13, 26, 52, or 82 game season.



SLAM 'N JAM

featuring
MAGIC & KAREEM

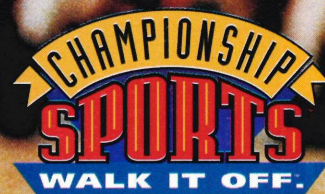
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It's Showtime! Slam 'N Jam '96 featuring Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul Jabbar bringing you the same net-melting offense that culminated in five championship rings. Set a bruising pick and run Magic and Kareem's patented no-look alley-oop.

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COMPANY	TELSTAR
RELEASE	SEPTEMBER
PRICE	£39.99
PLAYERS	1-4
GENRE	SPORT SIM

Davis - Cup Tennis

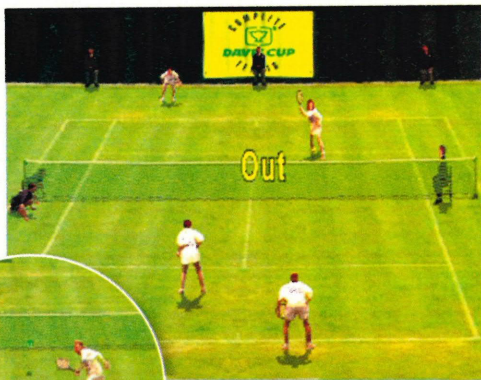


Short skirts, strawberries and cream and sunburnt shoulders. Probably the three most common signals it's tennis season again — and one of the most predictable introductions to the latest addition to the wealth of new PlayStation tennis games, apart from bemoaning how crap the English are at the sport. And while Wimbledon is the best known tournament in the world, the biggest and most popular one actually began life in 1900 in St. Louis, Missouri. The Davis Cup tournament is commonly recognised as the "World Cup" of tennis and many of the world's greatest players take part each year. André Agassi regularly appears, sporting a funky T-shirt and Brooke Shields, along with stars like Boris Becker and Michael Chang. Cashing in on this seasonal mania, Telstar are adding *Davis Cup Tennis* to the array of tennis games currently available for the PlayStation.

Due out in September, *Davis Cup Tennis* is up against some pretty stiff competition with the recent release of *Sampras Extreme Tennis*. But Telstar have approached the game from a new angle, using a technology called 'roto-morphing' to create photo-realistic graphics instead of the familiar cartoon-style animations.

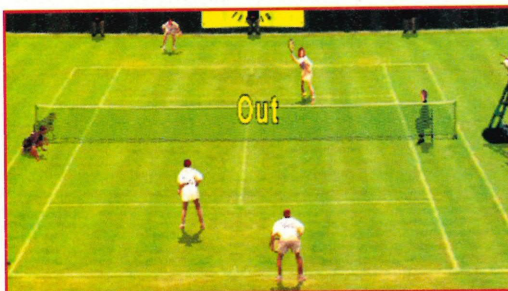
There are plenty of in-game options to keep you amused, from practice mode to a full blown tournament. You can play by yourself, or with up to three other bods using the Multi-Tap adaptor and with a massive 48 players to choose from, each with their own unique persona, there's not much danger of running out of choices too quickly.

Could this be the game to topple young Sampras off his pedestal as champion of the Tennis sims? Time will tell.



CENTER COURT ACTION

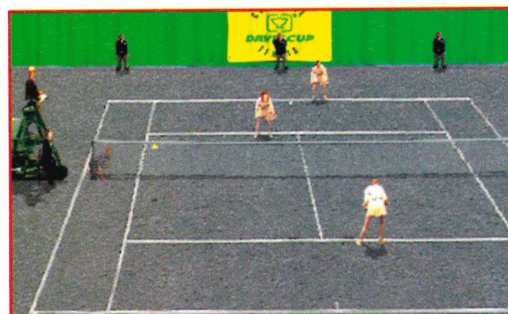
Every country in the world that enters the Davis Cup tournament is featured in the choice of locations. They are essentially split into four categories — grass, clay, concrete and wood.



Traditional grass courts are great, with the ball's bounce suppressed by the springy surface.



Clay is probably the easiest surface to play on, with a high bounce factor.



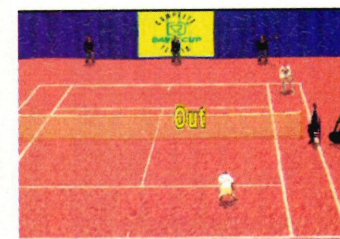
Take care on the concrete court — it adds extra speed to serves, but diving really chafes.



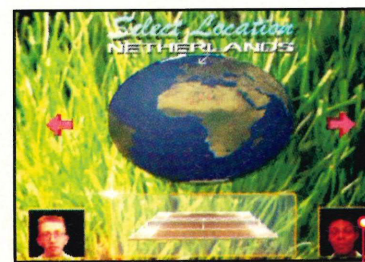
Squeaky trainers are essential on the wood surface, which has the same attributes as clay courts.

GET A LIFE

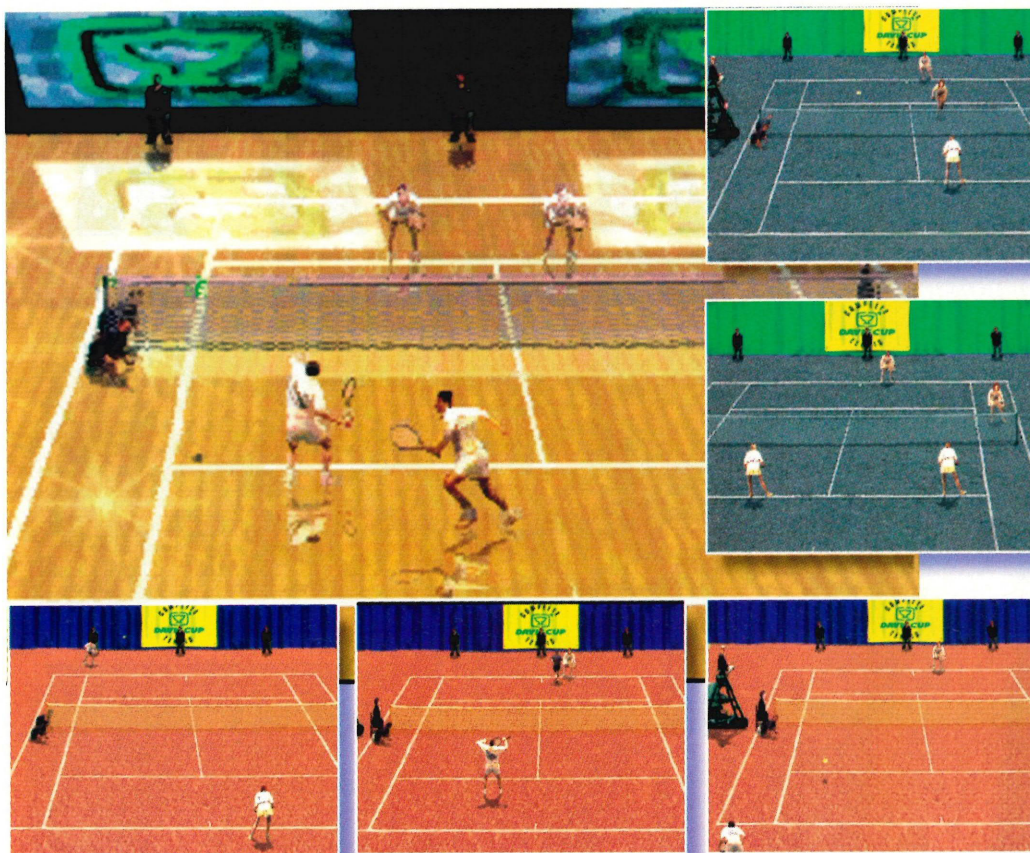
There are 48 players to choose from (all of whom are digitised renditions of the assorted public relations and programming teams working at Telstar), each with their own unique set of skills and attributes. The factors contributing to their prowess on the court include speed, strength, accuracy and manners — or, in some cases, the lack of them. The digitised sprites also seem to take the game very seriously, and if they miss too many high lobbs they will throw their racket to the floor and have a tantrum. You also get to pick your opponent's persona and, as you progress through the tournament, they will get harder and harder to beat.



Statistics Of Match Between			
1 ENZO ROMEO		Vs 1 PETER HOLDER	
100%	1st Serve In Percent	0%	
0	Aces	0	
0	Double Faults	0	
1	Games	0	
0	Sets	0	
RETURN		QUIT GAME	SAVE



PICK OUT THE LOCATION TO PLAY AND GET READY FOR ACTION. THE COURT SURFACE IS SHOWN AT THE BOTTOM.



PLAY STYLE

There are several different game modes as well as the practice mode. You can take on a random opponent in a quick game, play doubles or singles in a one off match, enter a league, go for a marathon session in winner stays on – or meet the creme-de-la-creme in the Davis Cup Tournament.

NOW IT'S TIME TO SET UP A MATCH. THE RANGE OF SETUPS AVAILABLE IS VERY WIDE. TRY A GAME OF DOUBLES OR SINGLES, THEN SELECT THE NUMBER OF SETS IN THE MATCH.

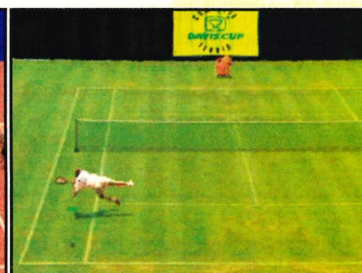
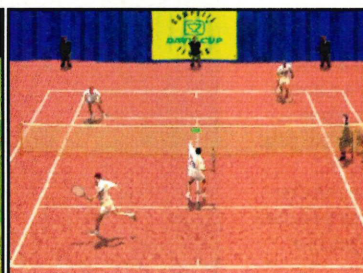
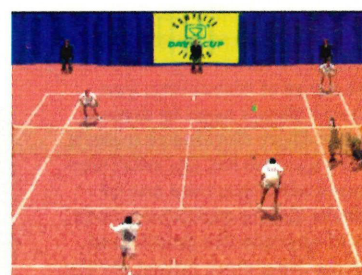
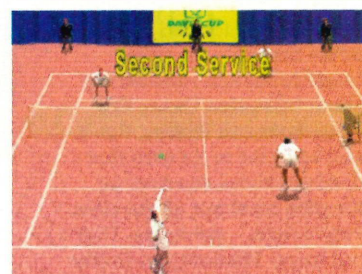
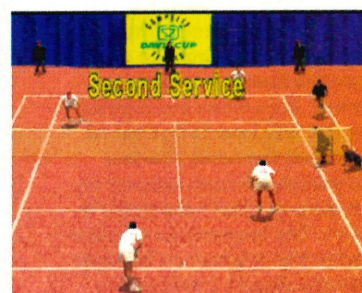


FULL ON TOURNAMENT OR JUST A QUICK GAME – THERE'S SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. ALL WE NEED NOW IS A SLICE OF ORANGE.



SMASHING

Before subjecting yourself to the humiliation of being knocked out of the tournament in the first round you can get you act together on the practice court. There are a good range of shots to choose from. The lob puts the ball high and deep into your opponent's space, the volley pushes a low fast ball across the net and the overhead smash does exactly what it says – smashes it over your opponent's head. The best stroke is the lock-volley. This can be used two ways – as a hard hit from deep in your space to a fast bullet return when you're up at the net. The programmers at Telstar hope to be including top and side spin. This is not confirmed yet, but the aftertouch function puts a nice curve on the ball if caught just right.





COMPANY	GT INTERACTIVE
RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	SHOOT 'EM UP



Isn't it strange that we spend so much time drooling over the graphics in games

like *Tekken 2* and *WipEout*, and yet when we get our hands on a classic arcade conversion like *Robotron* or *Defender*, we all line up with our noses pressed against the television screen, like kids at a sweet shop window. Perhaps seeing these games takes us back to days of grubby knees and climbing trees. Days when our biggest worry was how to get out of wearing the nerdy Clarkes shoes our parents insisted on buying us. That's partly it I'm sure. The moment we cracked open the wrapper on *Williams Arcade Classics* (reviewed in Issue 8), the air was suddenly filled with childhood anecdotes that only the teller found funny and reminiscing about television shows like *Fingerbobs* and *Pipkins*. But it also has a lot to do with that tired old cliché you hear us banging on about all the time. That's right – gameplay. That's not to say *WipEout* and *Tekken* don't possess this quality, they have it in abundance. But it does show to some extent that if a game has enough clout in the area of playability, you don't always need to dress it up in fancy clothing to make it into a smash hit. So, what happens when you take one of these totally addictive games and upgrade the graphics to something more fitting for the PlayStation? You get *Robotron X* – and presumably free tickets to the video-gaming equivalent of the Betty Ford Clinic.

TOTAL MAYHEM

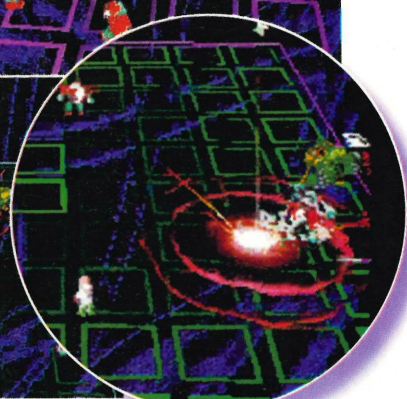
There are 99 levels in total, packed with dozens and dozens of different enemies. It's a good idea to watch each one carefully when you first encounter it, as some fire bombs at you or spawn other nasties, so take them out first to reduce the workload. There's also some that can't be destroyed, but they tend to move a bit slower than the others, so as long as you stay on your toes you should be able to avoid them. Your humans need picking up as soon as possible too, for extra points – but in the later levels it becomes a life and death issue as some robots have the power to mutate these hapless people into monster androids, which will just add to your headache.

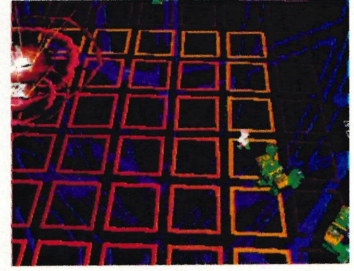
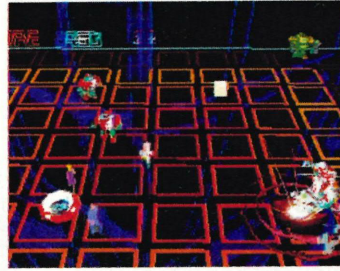
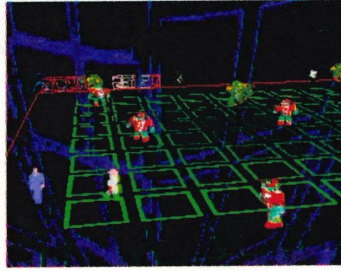
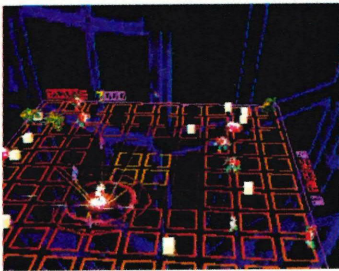
Robotron X



RUN LIKE CRAZY

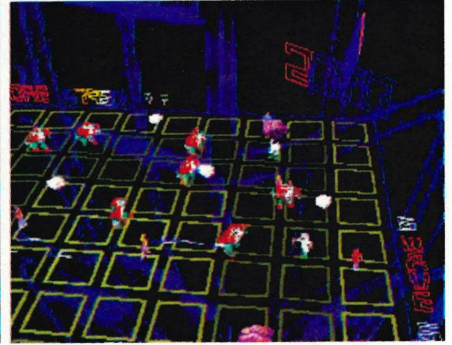
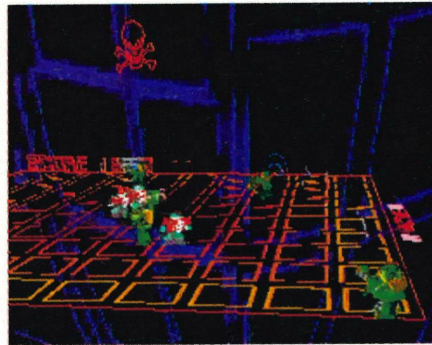
The plot is simple – rescue the wandering humans from a herd of marauding robots. Achieving your objective however, is not as simple. There are dozens of mechanical menaces to overcome, all intent on crushing your skull beneath their size nine's. As with the original game, you'll find yourself up against the odds in a box filled with robots – only to make matters worse, this time it's a 3D rotating grid, and your only hope is to slam your finger down on the fire button and run like crazy!





TWISTED METAL

As you battle your way through the levels, making sieves out of your enemies, an increasing range of power-ups and weapons are made available to pick up. This seems all very nice on the surface, until you realise that along with all this increased firepower comes much bigger and much badder robots to face. Even more chillingly, there is the odd kamikaze human and exploding mine. These, of course, are there just to keep you on your toes.

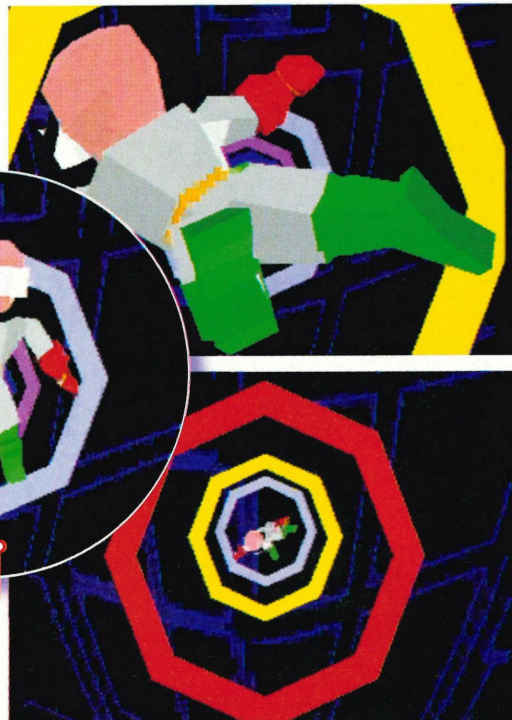


PSYCHO-DELIC

Robotron X recreates all the addictive action and energy of its predecessor and tops it off with some damn good extras. Psychedelic 3D rendered graphics whirling around a rotating camera view will have your head spinning, and while the concept is the same as the original, the Nineties version has spawned a particularly murderous collection of robots for you to face off against. A new feature for this version is a two player link-up, which is very cool and should add even more longevity to the game, with special power-ups and end of level bosses that will blow your mind.



THE LEVELS ARE LINKED BY A SEQUENCE WHERE THE PLAYER'S SPRITE DROPS DOWN TO THE NEXT STAGE. IT'S REMINISCENT OF THE OLD TIME TUNNEL TELEVISION PROGRAMME.

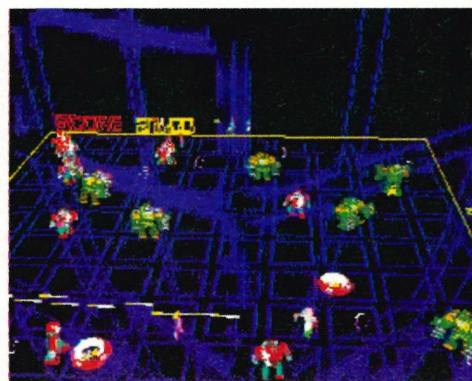
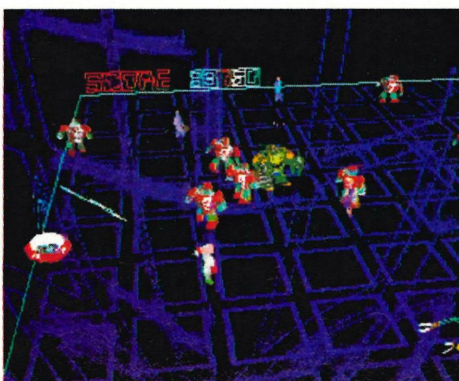
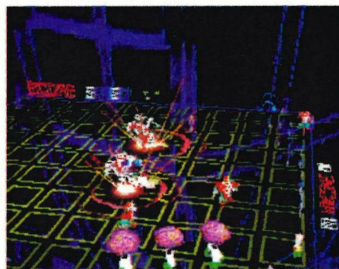


MERCY

And if all this sensory input isn't enough to overload your brain, plug in a couple of meaty stereo speakers and crank the volume right up. The thumping hardcore techno music is the final touch that will draw you into to the world of *Robotron X* and have you screaming for mercy.



AS THE ACTION HOTS UP, THE GAME CAMERA PANS IN AND OUT OF THE PLAY AREA TO GAIN MAXIMUM COVERAGE OF THE MANY EXPLOSIONS.



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD
CONTINUES: MEMORY CARD
SKILL LEVELS: 6

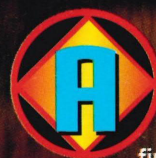
RELEASE OUT NOW

PRICE £44.99

BY OCEAN

PLAYERS 1

Tunnel



An opportunity has been sadly missed. After years of construction the Channel Tunnel is finally open, but so far has proved unsuccessful in earning back the billions it cost to build. A possible answer to recouping the immeasurable debt would be to use licencing to gain public interest. Picture this; *Channel Tunnel: the Video Game*.

Based on *Tunnel B1*, it would be financially beneficial to both Ocean and the Government, each party gaining a higher profile for their respective products. Better still, the game would barely have to be changed – simply swap the futuristic enemies for stripy-topped French blokes trying to invade Britain and you have the basis for a top selling game.

As it stands, *Tunnel B1* opts for the conventional video game storyline – mentally-deranged evil bloke creates armageddon device, evil blokes threaten to destroy mankind with said-device, lone soldier is drafted into deal with the problem. Sure, it's a cliched plot but one that is sufficiently adequate for what is essentially a shoot 'em up, albeit an extremely good looking one.

Stereotypes and cliches aside, *Tunnel B1* is the first fruits of Ocean's relationship with German developer Neon. It's one of the most anticipated PlayStation games of 1996 and rightly so, as *Tunnel B1* is by far one of the most visually impressive games to grace the Sony machine to date. It's crammed with action too, from reckless blasting to a frantic race against the clock through winding sewage tunnels. To be frank it's extremely good, but I still think Parisian onion-sellers would have made much better enemies.

THE TOOLS OF WAR

Without weapons, war is just a glorified playground scrap. No hair-pulling or petty brawls here though, as there are stacks of guns and missiles to collect. Most are hidden inside supply crates and, unsurprisingly, are somewhat heavily protected.

PRIMARY WEAPONS

Machine gun

The first and therefore the weakest weapon available in the game, probably the best (and only) benefit of using the machine gun is that it's equipped with unlimited ammunition. Can be upgraded to feature twin or triple barrels.



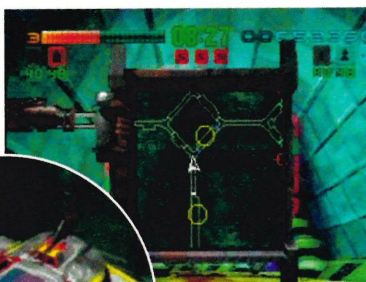
Rockets

These area-effect weapons are extremely useful against slow-moving enemies and the shield generators, but watch out for the resulting explosion. Can be fired in bursts of one or two depending on power, and can also be upgraded to a seeking rocket.

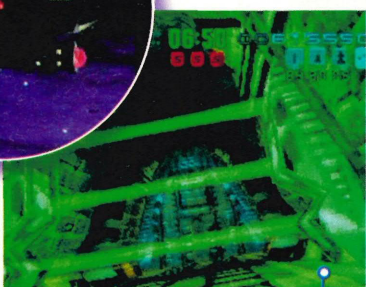


Missile

Similar in power to the rocket but considerably smaller and therefore far more manoeuvrable. Best used against fast moving targets as they can lock on and automatically track an enemy. Can be fired in bursts of one or two and the seeking missile can be target an enemy lurking around a corner.



MISSILES AND ROCKETS CAN BE UPGRADED TO FIRE TWO AT TIME. EXCELLENT STUFF, MAIS OUI?



BREAK THE BEAMS OF LIGHT THAT STRETCH ACROSS THE CORRIDOR AND YOU'LL ACTIVATE A SWITCH.

SECONDARY WEAPONS

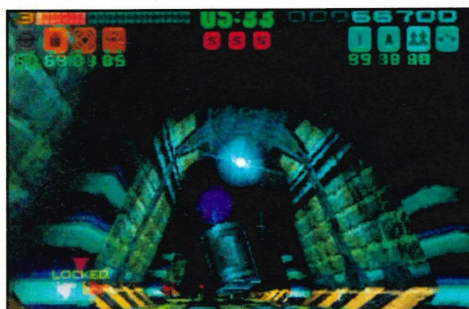
Flare

The ultimate in self-defence. When fired, the flares arc out in front of the skimmer, attracting any incoming homing missiles. Although not 100% effective, they help players to survive that bit longer.



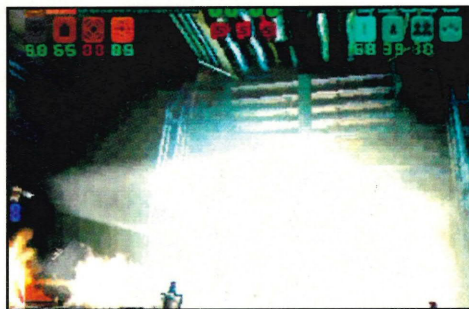
Mine

Dropped from the front of the ship, mines can be used to blow open doors or to nuke enemy minefields from a safe distance. Alternatively they can be 'kicked' at an enemy simply by sliding into them.



Smart Bomb

Extremely effective against heavily armoured enemies, the smart bomb will crack through all but the thickest force fields and will instantly wipe out any incoming missiles.



Super Smart Bomb

The Super Smart Bomb is constructed from five separate component, and when detonated causes an explosions five times as powerful as the Smart Bomb! Limited in supply, save this for the toughest enemies.



Argon Laser

The Argon Laser is only effective against enemies equipped with energy shields. Can be upgraded to twin barrels and eventually swapped for the more powerful Neon laser, which causes twice as much damage.

CRATE EXPECTATIONS

When creating *Tunnel B1* it's obvious that Neon have taken all the ingredients that make a playable shoot 'em up and bundled them into one neat, extremely attractive package. The graphics are nothing short of breath-taking and the gameplay is equally refined, but gameplay hasn't been forgotten. Take the power-up for example. Ever since *Nemesis* (or *Gradius* as it's known in Japan) introduced the humble power-up they've become an integral part of the shoot 'em up, and naturally *Tunnel B1* follows this example. There are loads of bonuses hidden within the game, hidden inside armoured crates that can be cracked open either by shooting or ramming them. Extra munitions are in abundance, although shield top-ups aren't quite so wide-spread. Stored inside massive radiation-proof canisters, the player has just ten seconds to grab the power-up before it explodes, leaving behind a lethal residue that saps energy rather than restores it! More important power-ups, such as extra weapons, are indicated on the map, thankfully making them almost impossible to miss. Without them, some of the later levels are practically impossible.



DISABLING THE ORPHEUS VIRUS



1 The mission begins with a short briefing. The objective is simply to exit the level intact, although you are advised to grab the weapon powers along the way.



2 Initially the skimmer isn't equipped with a weapon, so the only way to crack open the supply crates is to ram them. Inside the first: a pristine machine gun. Cool.



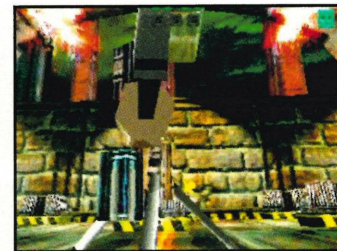
3 With the ship fully armed and operational, it's time to explore. Blasting a few more boxes uncovers various goodies and a twin-shot weapon power-up.



4 Seconds later the way is blocked by a huge blast door. Thankfully it's easy to open, by running over the pressure pad until the light switches over to green.



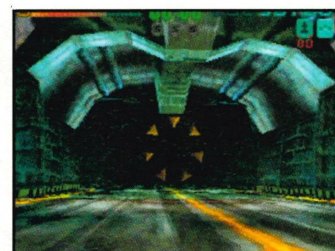
5 Behind the doors you encounter your first adversary – a remote cannon. Keeping moving to prevent it from acquiring a lock and open fire with twin machine guns.



6 More crates can be found further down the tunnel, some protected by a couple of remote sentries. Eliminate them and install the three-way fire power-up.



7 Ahead the tunnel becomes cramped, huge tank traps blocking the path. Carefully slide between them and target the transporter that attempts to escape.



8 Frag the transporter and all that remains is to hit the open the exit and speed into the warp hole. Don't celebrate too soon though – that was only the first level!

COMMENT

STEVE

There's no doubting the graphical finesse which is apparent throughout *Tunnel B1*, but personally I found the game too repetitive. The first couple of hours playing were rewarded with stunning explosions, claustrophobic settings and tough missions. However, after prolonged play and several return matches, it seems as if the game's tough difficulty level is there to prevent the player from finding out just how samey the game can be. It is this repetitive nature that prevents me from wholeheartedly recommending *Tunnel B1*. Even so, anyone who thinks PlayStation games are toothless will get their money's worth here.

PASSING TIME

Although there are countless objectives for each of the missions they can be separated into two specific types. A vast chunk of the game is spent furiously fighting off the enemy defensive line which, since *Tunnel B1* is primarily a shoot 'em up, comes as no surprise. It's not always that easy though, as some weapons are only effective against specific targets, and there are minor puzzles to solve along the way. These puzzles are admittedly very basic, solved simply by flicking switches to open gates and the likes, but at least they add a little depth to what is essentially a painfully straightforward blaster. Variety is given a further boost with the timed levels which appear later in the game. Although some the actual 'combat' stages are set against a strict time limit there are also levels in which the player must weave through winding tunnels, avoiding massive wooden crates and kicking in the turbo boosters to escape from the complex before the reactor reaches meltdown. There's no time to stop to engage the enemy or grab goodies, this is a race against the clock.

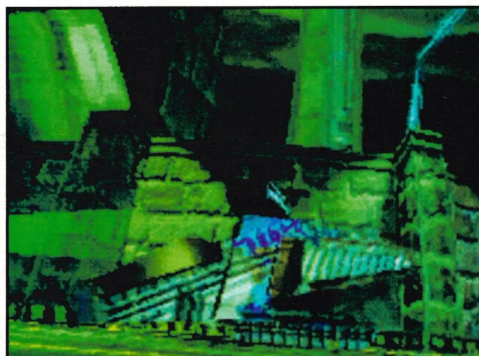


LIGHT-WINGED OPPOSITION



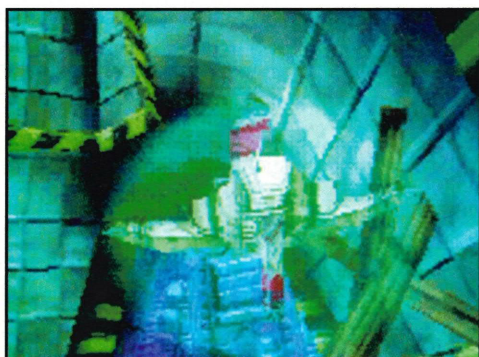
Patrol Skimmers

These light skimmers are pretty much identical to the player's craft, being highly manoeuvrable and fairly fast. They're poorly armoured however, and are only equipped with a rather weedy laser.



Transporter

Bulkier than the light skimmer and therefore considerably slower, the transporter isn't designed for combat and therefore will attempt to escape from your craft. Avoid its rear-firing cannon and lob off a couple of rockets.



Light Fighter

Found haunting the tunnels later in the game, these light fighters are extremely fast and therefore difficult to target. Use flares to draw away their homing missiles and use Seekers to blow them from the sky.



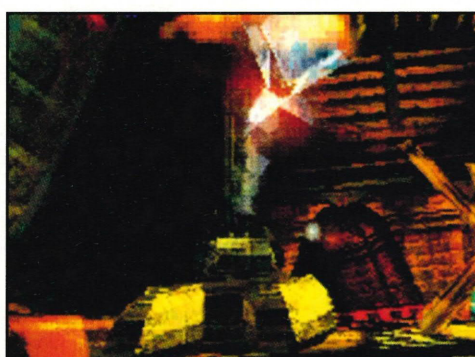
Remote Sentry

Lightly armoured and mounted on tripods, there are two types of remote sentry guarding the tunnels: the first is a machine gun while the more powerful brother boasts a high-powered laser.



Combat Chopper

The first challenging enemy encountered in the game, the combat choppers swap down and fire off homing missiles before rocketing back to the safety of the dark sky. They also drop streams of mini-nukes.



Heavy Tank

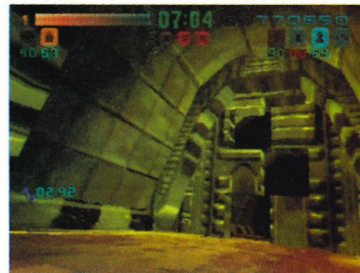
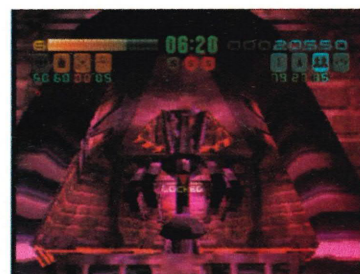
A truly formidable opponent, the tanks are protected by thick steel plating and, more often than not, a very powerful force field. Use the Argon to deplete its shield before switching over to rockets.



THE GENERATION GAME

As the game advances, the missions objectives get progressively more difficult. Ultimately the aim is always to escape within the time limit but to do this the complex tunnel network must be negotiated. Huge sections of each level are often cordoned off, and can only be accessed by opening the coloured blast doors that block the way. This can only be done by destroying the appropriate reactors – for example, crippling the pulsing cyan generators will open all the cyan doors, while damaging each of the purple reactors will unlock the purple gates, and so on. Therefore each nuclear reactor must be eliminated in turn, exploding in a dazzling ball of plasma before it's automatically sealed off to prevent radiation leakage.

Of course, failure to escape from the blast has fatal results as the radiation seeps through your ship. Even worse is the fact that the generators automatically repair themselves, so if you haven't managed to slip through the door in time you'll have to knock out each of the reactors again. Damn!



THE TUNNEL B1 SKIMMER DISSECTED

The complex layout of the skimmer's cockpit can prove disorienting to rookie pilots. Here's a beginner's guide.

1 SHIELD STATUS

At the start of each level, the skimmer's force shield generator is at full strength. However, this gradually depletes with each hit sustained. Collecting the radioactive pods restores approximately 50% of energy.

2 TIME

Later in the game, virtually every level is set against a time limit. The time left to complete the current objective is displayed here, although this can be increased by grabbing the appropriate power-up.

3 SCORE

Rather self-explanatory, really. However, manage to notch up a score of over a million and each subsequent million will result in an extra life being awarded.

6 PRIMARY WEAPONS

Similar to the secondary weapon display, all primary ordnance systems are displayed here. From left to right: Argon Laser; Missiles; Rockets; Machine Gun.

5 TURBO BOOSTERS

Up to three turbo boosters can be fitted, giving an enormous burst of speed that lasts for about twenty seconds. This can be used to crash through crates and such like.



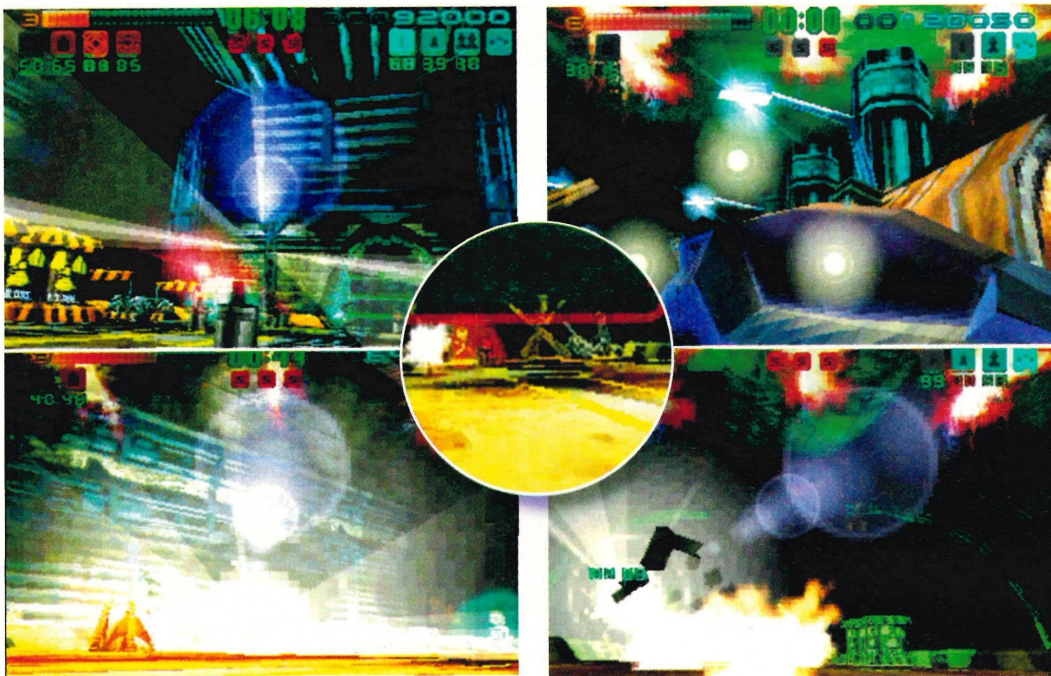
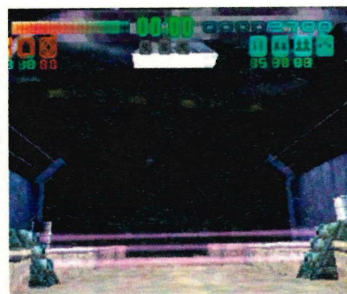
4 SECONDARY WEAPONS

The secondary weapons installed the amount of ammunition remaining for each is shown here. From left to right: Flares; Mines; Smart Bomb; Super Smart Bomb.

STRIKE A LIGHT

The most striking aspect of *Tunnel B1* is its presentation. No other game is as visually slick, both in terms of the smoothness of the scrolling or the impressive light-sourcing. This is largely due to Neon's advanced 3D engine which, as well as shifting complex 3D shapes with incredible ease, doesn't suffer from 'see-through' walls and other graphical glitches that dogged the likes of *Destruction Derby*. It's the dynamic lighting that really makes an impression,

though. The stretching corridors are lit by flickering neon lights of all colours, casting shadows and causing the virtual camera lens to flare as they scroll past. Blinding flashes stream from burning wrecks, vibrant lasers illuminate the darkness and radiative pods pulse with light, growing brighter as the player draws closer. As far as cosmetic gloss is concerned *Tunnel B1* is indeed a benchmark game, and a demonstration of what the PlayStation is really capable of.



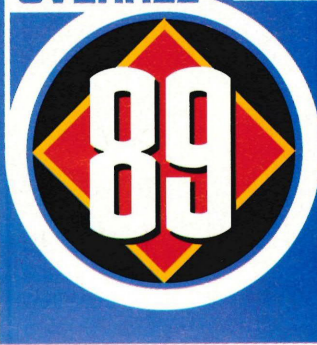
COMMENT

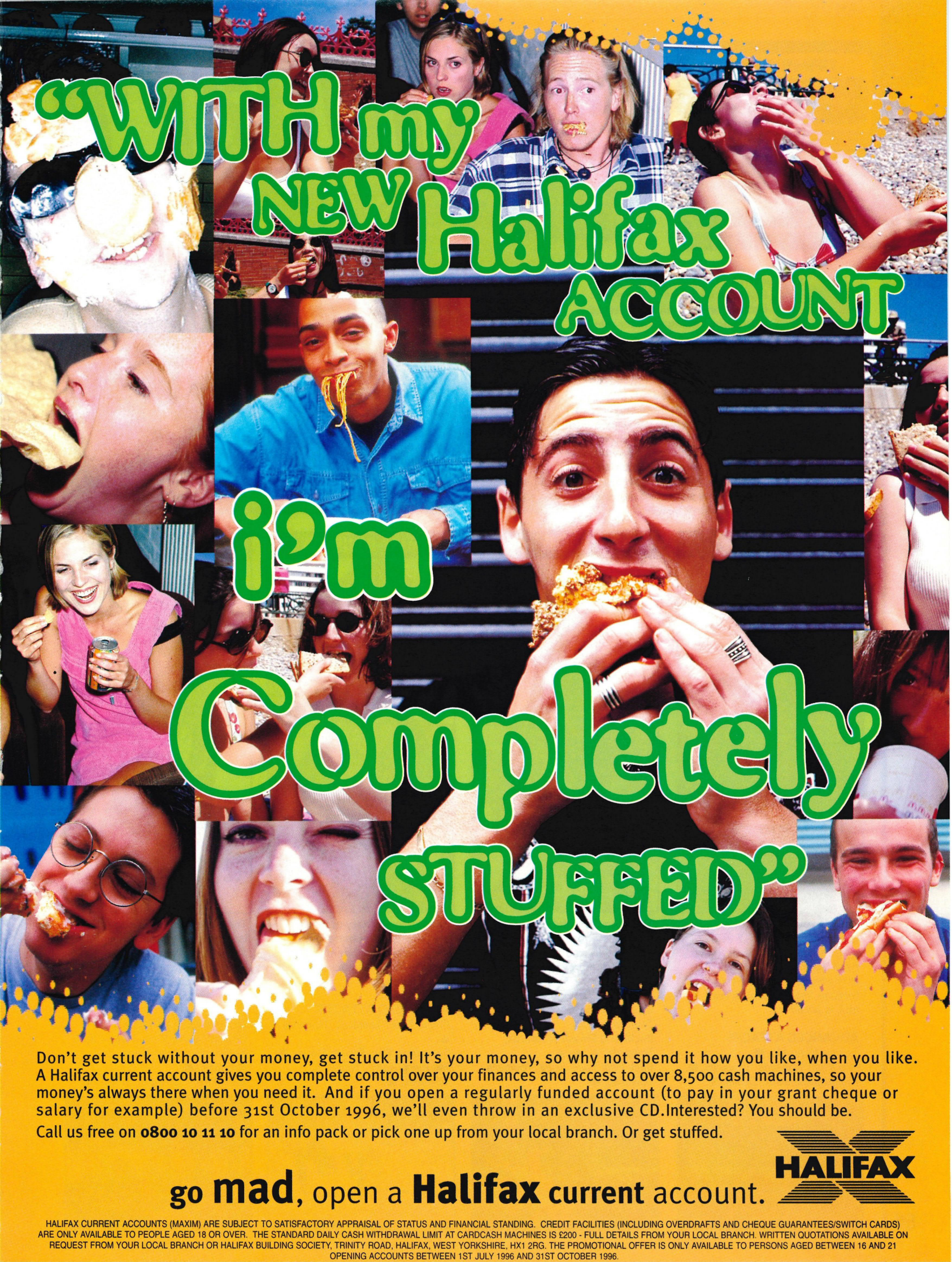
ALEX

Tunnel B1 is one of the most instantly appealing games I've seen in a long time, not because it's immediately playable but because the stunning graphics effortlessly draw the player in. The presentation really is faultless, with impeccable scrolling, detailed backgrounds and beautifully-crafted enemies. The lighting effects are even more dazzling and prove that the PlayStation really is capable of handling visually breath-taking games without compromising the frame-rate of the scrolling. Gameplay hasn't been overlooked either, and while *Tunnel B1* can be frustrating because the levels are so tough, it's still enjoyable to play. So why didn't it score over 90%? Quite simply there isn't enough variety. A truly classic game should excel in every aspect, and while *Tunnel B1* performs impressively in pretty much every field, it's dogged by repetition. Too many levels look alike, the enemies barely change, and overall you can't but feel a sense of déjà vu. This is a shame - with more variety it could have been a classic. As it is, it's just a very good game.

RATING

GRAPHICS	94
ANIMATION	92
SOUND FX	88
MUSIC	90
LASTABILITY	80
PLAYABILITY	84
OVERALL	89





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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
CONTINUES: MEMORY CARD
SKILL LEVELS: 3

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PLAYERS 1-2



Tobal No. 1



Tobal No. 1 is quite a departure for Japanese developer Squaresoft. Having forged their untarnished reputation coding monster role-playing games and now it has delved into the competitive beat 'em up ring.

Now *Tobal No. 1* is ready to face off against *Tekken 2*, or at least its fighters are. There are eight player characters as well as a selection of boss fighters to choose from, and each has travelled the universe to reach the planet Tobal to compete in the famed *Tobal No. 1* competition. The contest, which is held every two hundred days, is in its 98th year and rewards its victor unimaginable wealth, along with the title of becoming Super Tobal Man. Hmmm. The money sounds attractive but if the winner was lumbered with a name like that I wouldn't bother.



CHUJI-WU



Chuji is young boy highly skilled in martial arts. Just 17 years of age, he has travelled all the way from Earth to the planet Tobal in the hope of finding fame and fortune. Here's hoping lady luck is with him.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Scissor Kick: Up, ■.
Flip Kick: Towards, Towards, ■.
Breakdance Boot: Down, X.



OLIEMS



The alien from the planet Kientak stands in at almost two metres tall, so don't expect him beg to for mercy during a fight!

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Uppercut combo: Towards, Towards, ■, ■.
Backhand Smash: Towards, Towards, ▲, ▲, ▲.
Back Flip: Face away, Towards, Towards, ■.



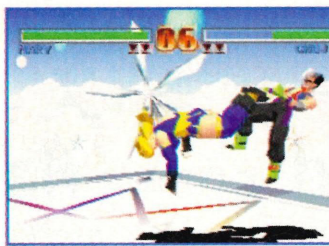
MARY-IVONSKAYA



Chunky lover Mary use sheer brute force to pummel her unfortunate opponent, burying them under her knockout knoc... assets.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Flying Kick: Towards, Towards + ▲.
Sweeping Fist: Down, Down, ■.
Swirling Death: Towards, Towards, ■.



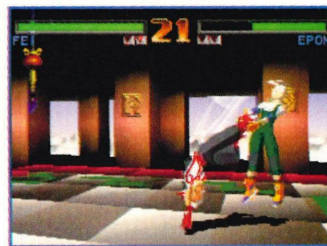
FEI-PUSU

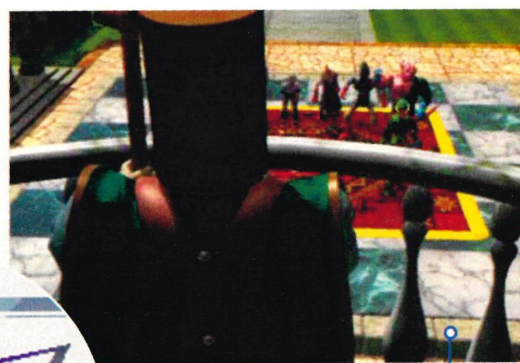
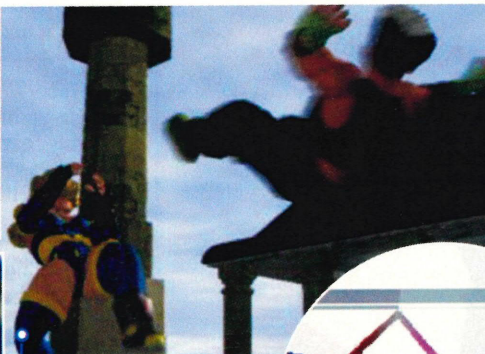


The obligatory old codger, Fei is surprisingly fast on his feet and can perform some meaty kicks. Surprisingly the old blokes throws are extremely effective too.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Double Sweep Kick: Away + X, X.
Rolling Flip Kick: Away, Towards+■.
Barrel Roll: Grapple, Hold + ■.





THE GAME OPENS WITH A COOL INTRODUCTORY SEQUENCE STARRING EACH OF THE FIGHTERS.

THIS GUY WITH THE BIG EARS IS LORD UDAN, HOLDER OF THE TOBAL NO.1 CROWN. HE'S A RABBIT...

COMMENT

STEVE

On first sight *Tobal No. 1* appeared to be a *Virtua Fighter* clone, with all the graphical finesse of Sega's dated coin-op. While the polygon sprites look a tad simplistic, never does *Tobal No. 1* suffer from line removal like the Sega game, and the actual fighting is so well done (a wealth of heavy punches and kicks with more impact than any of Sega's *Virtua Fighter* games), that any initial reservations were soon forgotten. The sprites are incredibly well animated and behave just like real combatants, and extra icing on a tasty fighting cake is added via the stunning 'quest' mode. Cool.



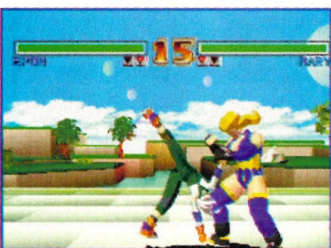
EPON



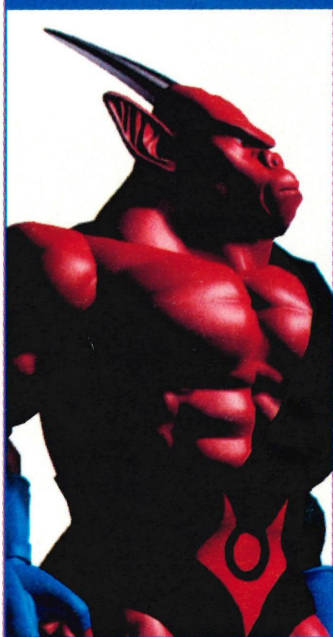
Don't be fooled by Epon's fragile body – this girl is a tough fighter who prefers bear hugs to comforting cuddles. She's fast on her feet, making her a formidable opponent.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Cartwheel Kick: Towards, Towards, ■.
Low Sweep: Towards, Towards, X.
Power Uppercut: Up, Up, ■.



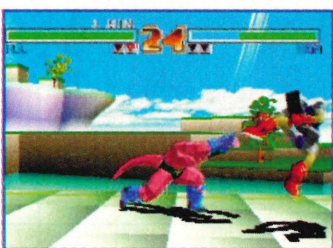
ILL-GOGA



This horned giant measures in at over two metres of pure muscle. Boasting unparalleled strength, watch out for this guy's power punches and remember to exploit his lack of agility.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Double-fisted Power Punch: Away+■.
Headbutt: Towards + ■, ■.
3-jab Combo: ▲, ▲, ▲.



GRENN KUTS



A rough, tough bare-fist fighter, Gren is very light on his feet but at the same time packs a powerful uppercut punch. Get in close, attacking with jab-combos to the body.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Triple Roundhouse: Block + ▲, ▲, ▲.
Power Roundhouse: Towards, ▲.
Super Uppercut: Towards, ■.



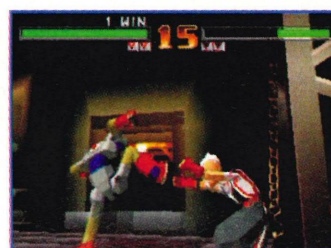
HOM



The only robot to enter the Tobal competition. Hom trained by winning the 66th Tobal championship. His skills therefore match his immense robotic strength.

ADVANCED ATTACKS

Stomp and Jab: ■, ▲.
Double Kick: Away, ■.
Swooping Backhand: Towards, Towards + ▲.





Tournament

EMPEROR STRIKES BACK

True 3D gameplay aside, *Tobal No.1*'s tournament offers no real surprises, following the age-old tradition that the beat 'em up fighter must first battle through the preliminary bouts against each of the other player characters. In *Tobal no.1*'s case this being eight. They then go on to face the tougher boss character; the first to rear his ugly head being the alien Mufu. Best described as a hot-cross bun with limbs, Mufu executes an impressive display of kicks and knee-jerks but is susceptible to leg-sweeps. The next boss, Nork the Mysterious, isn't quite so easy going. A towering three metres tall, he's incredibly difficult to attack due to his immense size and is impossible to throw.



Punches and kick to his bulbous belly seems most effective but watch out for his oversized fists that smash together. The current holder of the Tobal No.1 crown is Emperor Udan, an athletic fighter with appearance of a man-size rabbit. He's incredibly nimble, flipping through the air while perform some staggering mid-air kicks and power slams. He's almost impossible to throw too, so don't even bother.



OKAY, SO THE BLOKE'S FAT, BUT HIT HIM HARD AND HE'LL FALL TO THE GROUND LIKE A SACK OF POTATOES.

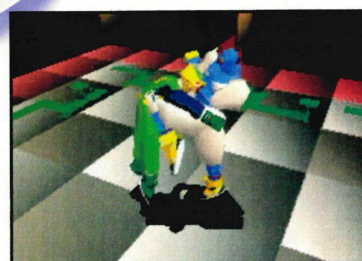
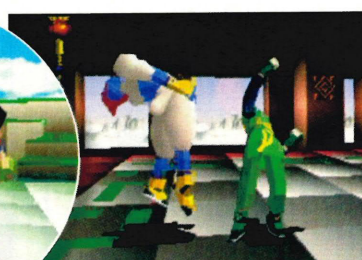


RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

As *Tobal No.1* concentrates on in-your-face, close-up hand-to-hand combat ranged attacks barely feature in the game. Instead there's a wide array of punches, kicks and throws to master, although they're handled very differently that of *Tekken 2*. Rather than hard and soft punches and kicks, the attacks are divided into high, middle and low, each fighter punching or kicking depending on their individual style. More powerful attacks are achieved by running into combat and lashing out, while impressive leaping kicks are executed simply by pressing both the attack and jump buttons together.

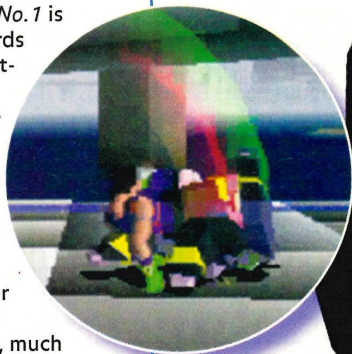
However, *Tobal No.1* has been designed to be somewhat realistic – in the sense that the fighters are limited by their physical form. Therefore they can't spiral high through the air and flaming uppercuts are nowhere to be found – just a dazzling array of bone-crunching hooks and sweeping roundhouse kicks that can be strung together to form some very meaty combos.

Throws are impressive though. Initiated by closing in on the opponent and grabbing them around the shoulders, fighters will either throw, headbutt, knee or shin-kick depending on the follow-up attack. Headbutts and kicks cause little damage they are difficult to avoid. Throws, on the other hand, are easy to counter and it's all too easy to end up on the floor after you initiated the grapple!



Even though the PlayStation is awash with graphically 3D fighting games none actually true three-dimensional play – even *Tekken 2* uses a pseudo-3D, flat plain. *Tobal No. 1* is different. As well as nudging towards and away from their opponent fighters can move in and out of the screen, enabling them to effectively step out of the way of an incoming attack. This gives the game greater depth than most other beat 'em ups, although it's a little tricky to pick up because both the block and jump commands are assigned to shoulder buttons rather than the Dpad.

Each bout is set inside a ring too, much like those featured in *Virtua Fighter*. Therefore it's possible to win the match not only by knocking out the opponent, but also by shoving them out of bounds. Admittedly it's a cheesy way to win, but when you're down to the last slither of energy, desperate times call for desperate measures.

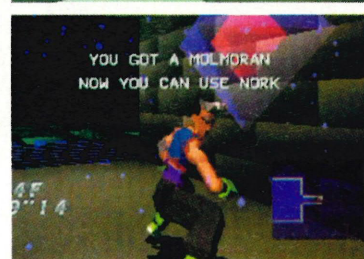
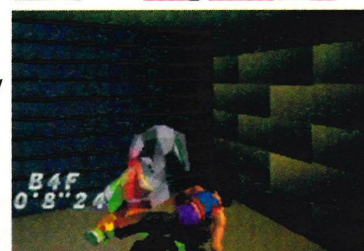


QUEST FOR GLORY

To say *Tobal No. 1* is just another beat 'em up is like reckoning Oasis have yet to make it. *Tobal No. 1* is another beat 'em up, but one that has far more to offer than even the all-conquering *Tekken 2*. In addition to the obligatory tournament and verses fights there's also a Quest mode to enter. Doing so warp the player in a 3D dungeon which is viewed from above and behind, similar to the view adopted by most first-person perspective role-playing games. From the opening junction the player has five exits to choose from – each leads to a separate dungeon that varies on difficulty as well as the enemies encounter within. The easiest of all is the practice dungeon, which introduces the player to the various moves the fighter is capable of. These include running and jumping, as well as picking up objects such as food and eating them to restore energy.

The dungeons have their fare share of bad things too. Each is plagued by monsters which are battled tournament-style, doors closing to form a small arena and the player then capable of performing each of the moves perfected in the tournament mode. When the monster is defeated, the doors open, allowing the player to continue.

Incredibly there is a point to actually persevering through these challenging sub-games. Lurking at the end of each dungeon is one of the boss characters from the tournament. If defeated they leave behind colourful crystals and other precious bonuses, but better still is that now they appear on the character selection screen so players get the chance to player as the lanky Mufu or the nimble Emperor Udan. Cool!



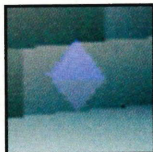
GRAB THE SWAG

Although evil outweighs good in the dungeons of *Tobal*, help is on hand in the form of glittering

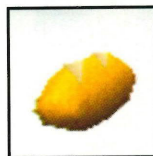
bonuses. There are plenty on offer, providing you look hard enough...



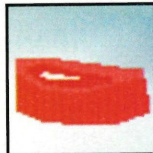
Potion
The effect of each potion varies although not necessarily depending on colour. Some restore energy, others are poisonous and drain it away.



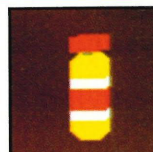
Blue Gem
Blue gems can be exchanged for provisions like bread at the pink bonus pads. Each item costs five gems and up to three bonuses can be taken from each pad.



Bread
A wholesome loaf restores a little energy when eaten. However, if you're at full fitness it can be carried through the level and saved for later.



Meat
More nutritious than bread, the chunk of meat restores approximately thirty health points when eaten. Again, it can be carried through the levels until needed.

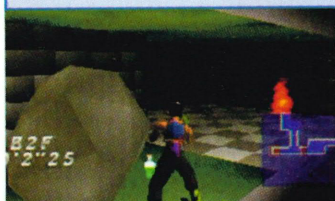


Glass Jar
At first the glass jar seems to have no use. Don't throw it away though, just smash it against a wall and a pink bonus pad will automatically appear.



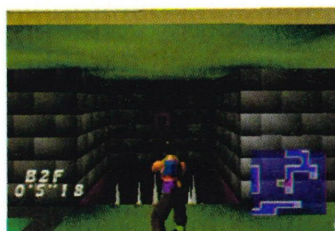
Cherry Dynamite
Gulp down the Cherry Dynamite and the fighter's reflexes are immediately heightened, allow them to execute a dazzling array of super-fast attacks.

LETHAL WEAPONS



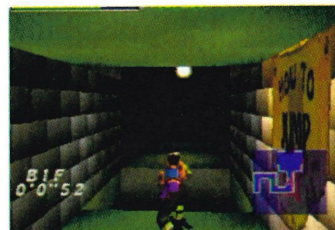
Boulder

Boulders can be avoided either by outrunning them or staying close to the wall.



Spike Pit

Not as forgiving as the pits, stumble down here and you'll be skewered by sharp spikes!



Pits

Fall down a it and you'll tumble to the level below, losing energy in the process.



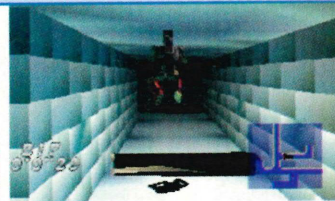
Poison Dart

Activated by stepping on a pressure pad. Leap over the pad to avoid its lethal toxins.

Each dungeon is littered with obstacles as well as enemies. Here are a few tips on how to avoid dying in the dungeons.

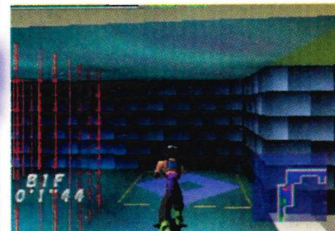


TO PUSH THE SWITCH SIMPLY RUN UP TO THE LEVER AND HIT ONE OF THE ATTACK BUTTONS.



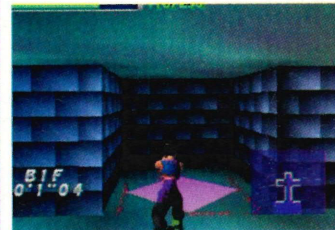
Log

Just jump high into the air to avoid being crushed by these rolling logs.



Blue Bonus Pad

Place a worthless object here to collect a load of multi-coloured gems (see Pink bonus pad).



Pink Bonus Pad

Not really an obstacle as such. Trade in five gems to receive a random bonus.



Laser Fence

A friendly word of advice: avoid the laser fences or risk being fried alive.

COMMENT

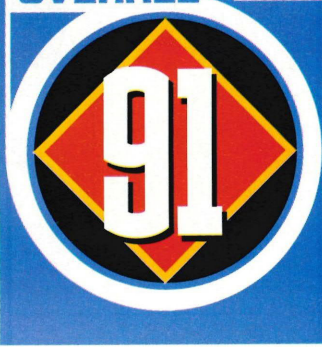
ALEX

Tackling presentation first,

although the characters aren't as detailed as those in *Tekken 2* they move more realistically, the slick motion-capture injecting a fluidity that really is quite astonishing. Each punch and kick is beautifully animated and is enhanced further by the apparent solidity the fighters have. The attacks actually look as if they hurt, giving the game a sense of unparalleled authenticity. In terms of gameplay *Tobal No. 1* is somewhat of a departure from the 3D beat 'em up norm, largely because of the true 3D fighting arena. This makes it slightly more difficult to pick up than *Tekken 2* but with practice there is just as much scope for stringing together impressive combo attacks. What *Tobal No. 1* does offer over Namco's classic, however, is a little more depth in the form of quest mode - it's a refreshing way of accessing the boss characters. Sure, some fighting fans will resent having to look for the hidden warriors but it give another dimensions to what could easily be a desperately average beat 'em up.

RATING

GRAPHICS	90
ANIMATION	95
SOUND FX	92
MUSIC	82
LASTABILITY	94
PLAYABILITY	91
OVERALL	91



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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD
CONTINUUES: 6
SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

PRICE £44.99

BY SONY

PLAYERS 1-2



Hands up all those who wanted to be a fighter pilot when they were a nipper. Soaring through the cobalt blue sky on the tail of some enemy jet. Squeezing the trigger of your missile launcher and watching the vapour trail spin out in front of you as it finds its mark and reduces your foe to a fiery ball of mangled metal. Then disappearing into the sunset with a vertical roll and a toothpaste advert smile. Anyone who's seen enough tacky Tom Cruise films will be forgiven for thinking the life of a fighter pilot is all heroic stunt flying and manly comradeship. In reality, the experience is more likely to feel like being locked in a 'phone booth in the height of summer while some maniac spins it around at a hundred miles an hour and shoots live ammunition at you. All the same, there's no denying the fantasy is still extremely appealing, which is why so many movies and games have been developed from it. On the PlayStation alone we've seen such hits as *Top Gun* and the awesome *Agile Warrior*.

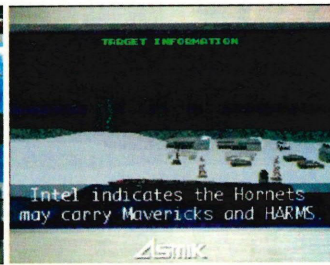
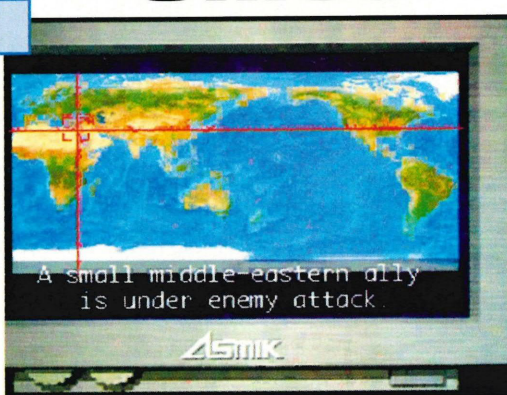
Now it's Sony's turn, with the release of *Raging Skies* — a combat flight sim that claims to take the genre to new heights of realism and performance. Authentic aircraft profiles and true-to-life weaponry make it an intense and engrossing experience. But what about the gameplay?



Raging Skies

PLANE SAILING

Having spent years in a military academy you emerge as a fresh-faced young hot-shot pilot just in time to find out about an international crime organisation that is threatening the safety of the world. Supported by a number of leading countries, a full-scale military operation has been planned and you are drafted into a special international air force unit to take on these harbingers of destruction and restore peace to the heavens. Along with the most highly qualified pilots in the world, you'll embark on three short training missions to familiarise yourself with the equipment before taking to the skies.



CHOCES AWAY

There are six aircraft to choose from in all, each with their own unique characteristics. During the training missions you'll play around in all six, but

once you enter the mission proper you'll have to work your way up through the levels before jumping into the better ones.

F22 SUPERSTAR

This is undoubtedly the best of the bunch, with an almost perfect top speed. Granted its endurance and stability are reduced, but by this stage of the game you'll be such a skilled pilot those damn bogeys won't even get a look in — you hope.



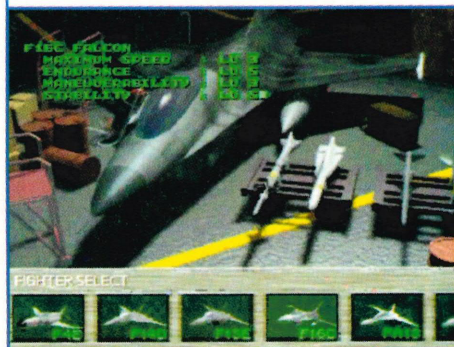
FA18 HORNET

The Hornet — an angry bee with a serious sting in its tail! This plane is a great all rounder, scoring one mark off the top specs across the board. A great dog-fighter to really get stuck into the meleé with, and one you'll use over and over again.



F16C FALCON

This craft may not be as fast as the Eagle, but what it lacks in speed it more than makes up for in stability and endurance. This is probably just as well, as the skies are littered with enemy fighter planes who will be more than happy to pepper you full of holes.



COMMENT

ALEX

Judging by the quality so far, I don't think this style of flight sim really works on the PlayStation. Like *Top Gun*, *Raging Skies* suffers from being difficult to control and is really rather dull. There's no sense of tension while dogfighting handfuls of MiGs, and this is made slightly worse by the awkward control system. A lot of time is spent circling the skies, desperately trying to lock on to an opponent. This is boring. *Agile Warrior's* arcade style worked much better, and while this isn't quite so simple it isn't a full-blown flight sim either - it's too basic. Better than *Top Gun*, but still disappointing.



CONTROL YOURSELF

As with other in-depth flight sim's the control system in *Raging Skies* is really tricky to get the hang of. As well as the usual directional controls, L1 and R1 provide the throttle up and down, and L2 and R2 the rudders to yaw the plane from left to right. Airspeed and control are vital to a successful mission, especially in the later levels as your enemies get more cunning and the conditions more treacherous.



KICK IN THE AFTERBURNERS, RELEASE THE WHEEL BRAKES AND SET OFF FOR ENEMY AIR SPACE.

THERE ARE SOME REALLY COOL CUTSCENES THAT APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE GAME.

F14D TOMCAT

Having completed the first mission you upgrade to the Tomcat. It handles slightly better than the Phantom and has an improved top speed. However you lose some of the stability and endurance, so be sure to have your travel insurance up to date.



F4E PHANTOM

The first plane you can get hold of. The slowest, least stable and hardest to manoeuvre it's a real bugger and not nearly as much fun as the later aircraft. It doesn't have a great deal of endurance either, so don't forget to wear a parachute.



F15E EAGLE

This baby is quite a jump in terms of performance from what you've had until now. A top score for speed and manoeuvrability, endurance and stability - but then you'll need it! Get through this far and the missions start becoming extremely tough.



BLAST!

Select the Easy Level from the options menu and you'll be treated to an unlimited supply of weaponry because, let's face it, a beginner is going to do a whole lot of 'missing'. Move up to the normal and hard modes and knowledge of your missions and the weapons abilities will become vital to clearing the stage. Having been given your brief you'll be asked to select a plane and load it up with ammo. Filling up with sidewinders on a mission to destroy an enemy battleship is perhaps not the best strategy in the world.

VULCAN CANNON

Your basic machine gun. Blast away when the enemy is in close range and conserve your missiles for the more accurate long distance shots.

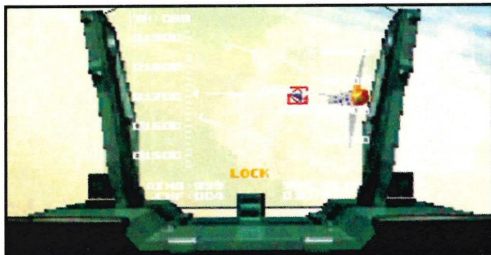
AIM9 'SIDEWINDER'

Heat-seeking short range air-to-air missile which uses infrared sensors to detect the heat of aircraft engine exhausts. A deadly accurate and extremely versatile weapon, but very susceptible to evasion by decoys and chaff.



AIM120 'AMRAAM'

Mid-range semi-active air-to-air radar-guided missile which uses short range radar to home in on the enemy. Not as quick to use as the sidewinder, so more flying skills are required to get a lock on. But once it's on target, it rarely misses the mark.



AGM88 'HARM'

Anti-warship missile which homes in on the source of electro-magnetic radar emissions. It's best used for — errr.. blowing up warships. But watch your back, enemy fighter pilots tend not to take kindly to having their comrades barbecued.

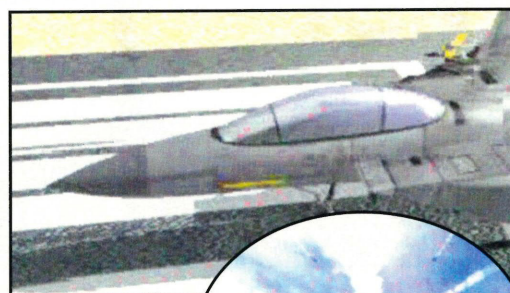
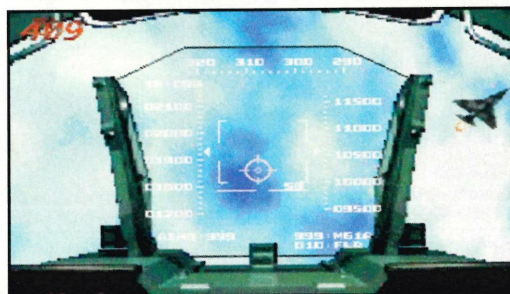
AGM65 'MAVERICK'

Air-to-ground missile which uses an infrared camera to track its target. During the course of the game you'll find yourself on many different missions that this missile will be essential for, so listen to your brief well. If your commander mentions blasting a large hole in the middle of an enemy base — grab a handful of these babies and get going.



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Your missions will be wide ranging and varied, including defensive and aggressive roles. To start with your briefs are mostly of a defence nature, but hang in there and you soon get to wreak havoc in the air.



OH JOY!

We are told *Raging Skies* will be fully compatible with the new Analog Joystick that responds accurately to minute movements in the same way that a real aircraft yoke would. There's no doubt a game like this will really benefit in terms of playability with this option — but don't hold your breath. We've been teased with the prospect of this add-on for months now, but there is still no commitment from Sony as to when, if ever, it will be available.

COMMENT

KATE

What makes a good combat flight sim? That's a bit of a grey area and to be frank the answer really depends on whether you're looking for fast moving arcade style action or plenty of in depth realism. We saw the first attempt at combining these elements with the release of *Top Gun*, but for my money the complicated controls took a lot away from the 'fun' of the game. The same can be said of *Raging Skies*. The full screen view is a nice touch, but sadly ruined by the fact there's no map, so you have to keep flipping back to the cockpit view to see where the enemy is. Another element it's lacking is external views, except a rather sorry crash sequence when you finally bite the bullet. Graphically dig a little deeply and you find there isn't enough detail in the enemy planes to distinguish them easily and the explosions and effects are more than a little disappointing. Having said all that, the realism in the handling and controls is excellent, but don't expect to be able to 'pick up and play' *Raging Skies* — only serious fighter pilots need apply.

RATING

GRAPHICS	84
ANIMATION	76
SOUND FX	77
MUSIC	70
LASTABILITY	69
PLAYABILITY	73

OVERALL

73

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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: VARIOUS

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

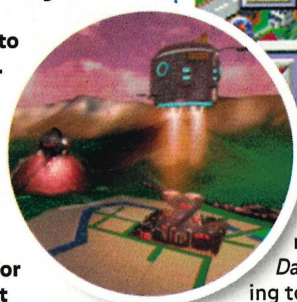
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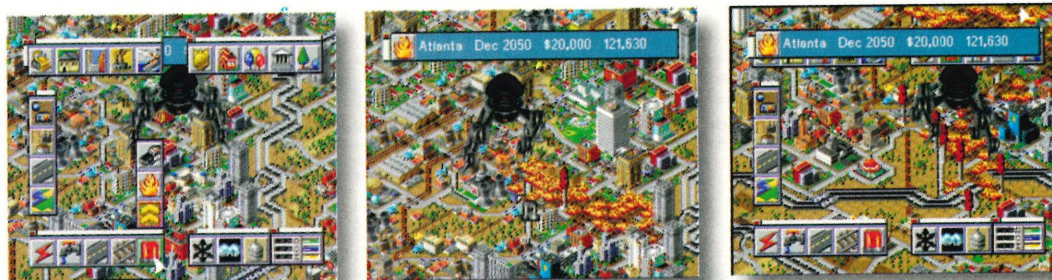
PLAYERS 1



Since their emergence in the UK in 1989, the name Maxis has become synonymous with the Sim games that have been so successful in the PC market for the past seven years. PlayStation owners got a taste of the 'God' style of game on the Sony machine when Bullfrog converted *Theme Park* late last year, but hardened gamers found the lack of action and the cutesy objective more than a little stifling. The problem, it seemed, was it was all a little sanitised. The best you could do in terms of immediate action and homicidal rampaging was sack your park maintenance men, over do the food so your customers felt a bit sick and wait for the rides to break down. Hardly the same rush of adrenaline as you get from stomping on a zombie's head while rattling off several hundreds rounds of ammo into an innocent crowd. But a lot of people loved it (including us), with the strategic skill and planning needed to successfully build your park making for a game so different from anything else on the (then) new Sony machine. While there was little in the way of explosive action, creating a successful park was a welcome break from the fighting scenarios offered by *Battle Arena*, *Toshinden* and *Tekken*.



So, after a long wait, the King of Sims has finally hit the PlayStation — and, to appease those with a destructive bent, you can blow stuff up too! As with real life, *Sim City 2000* comes with a full compliment of disasters, as well as the option to unleash them on your unsuspecting citizens without little or no provocation. People unhappy about taxes? Fine, destroy the area they live in. Yes, *Sim City 2000* is commercialism gone mad, so get all those bulldozers at the ready, chew on a very fat cigar and sit back and watch the trials and tribulations of your Sim Civilians.



Sim City²⁰⁰⁰

DEMOLITION MAN

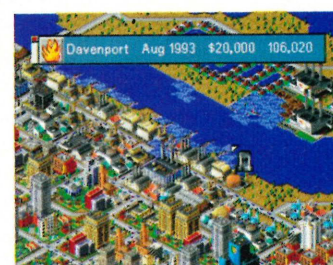
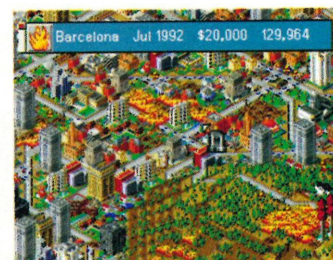


Sim City 2000 showcases a most unusual list of disasters to rain down on your people. Floods, fires, tornadoes, monsters and alien invasions (prepare for *Independence Day*) are the order of the day, and it's frighteningly satisfying to wipe out half a city with the swipe of a mouse. Using the emergency services icon you can deploy the chosen force to combat the problem, but if you skimped on your finances you could end up with a bigger one than you planned. Always a good idea to save the game before unleashing your wrath on the city.

COMMENT

ALEX

Congratulations must go to Maxis, who have taken one of the PC's most complex games and have successfully converted it to the PlayStation. Not an easy job, considering the original relied heavily on mouse control, but thanks to the fast access menu bars the game is a lot more user-friendly. Gamers no longer have to trawl through rows of icons looking for the 'mayor popularity' icon because it's all presented in a clear, functional style. Other improvements include a neat (but ultimately useless) drive-through section in which players are treated to a 3D trip through their hand-made city. Otherwise there's very little difference between this and original *Sim City 2000*, but then who cares? What counts is that PlayStation *Sim City 2000* is still one of the most absorbing resource management games on any format, and is a game that effortlessly manages to combine engrossing gameplay with complex strategy. Make no doubt, a brilliant game that has undergone a minor facelift and has come out looking suitably refreshed and revitalised.

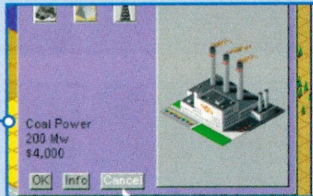


SETTING UP HOME



Before getting into the task of building your empire, you have to decide where you're going to put it. There are a number of prepared cities to work from and a variety of scenarios which ask the player to prevent disasters. Failing that you can edit your own landscape and start from scratch.

POWER First things first, fire up a power plant. If you start at the year 1900 only coal will be available. The choices get more sophisticated as time goes on.



ROADS Essential to any thriving young community — roads. All major buildings must be accessible, so forward planning of quick routes is essential.



ZONING There are three zone types: industrial, commercial and residential. These can be allocated as either heavy or light density, and the on screen panel will tell you what you're short of. If an area is too industrial, for example, pollution will be a problem and people won't want to live there. A bit like London.



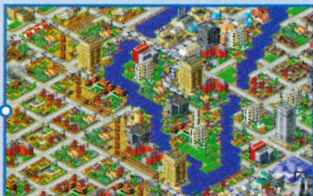
999 Skimp on the emergency services and you could well be in trouble when the aliens land, and chaos will erupt as disgruntled citizens run riot at the way they are treated.



EDUCATION Don't forget to provide some schools. Stupid Sim people don't create good economic policies, and the future of your city will be jeopardised.



FUN STUFF Save the best till last. You'll get a nice cheer when you build a park, zoo or stadium, but they cost a bomb and don't contribute much to the coffers. However, if the natives are getting restless it's worth biting the bullet and cheering them up with an expanse of green or something else to fill their leisure time.



BUDGET DAY

Once a year you get to do a Kenneth Clarke and tell the populous how much money you're going to take from them. Unfortunately there's no sign of John Major, or you could arrange for a riot and give him a good kicking.

TAXES

Set your taxes too high and you'll have a ghost town. Too low and you'll be history.

BONDS

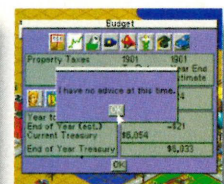
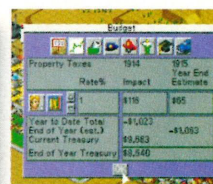
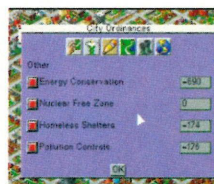
Borrowing against the city's assets provides fast expansion, but do not overstretch resources.

AMENITIES

Money can be used in many ways including VAT, sales tax, tourism and advertising.

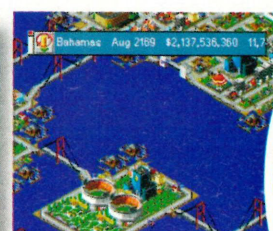
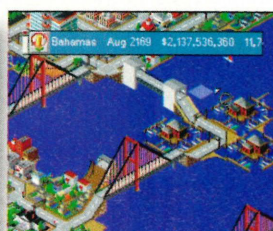
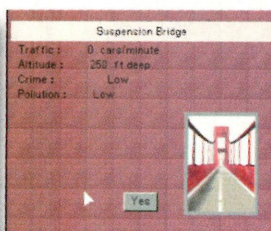
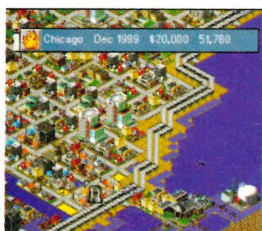
FUNDING

Budgeting for the city's resources can be tricky, but your ministers will advise you when asked to.

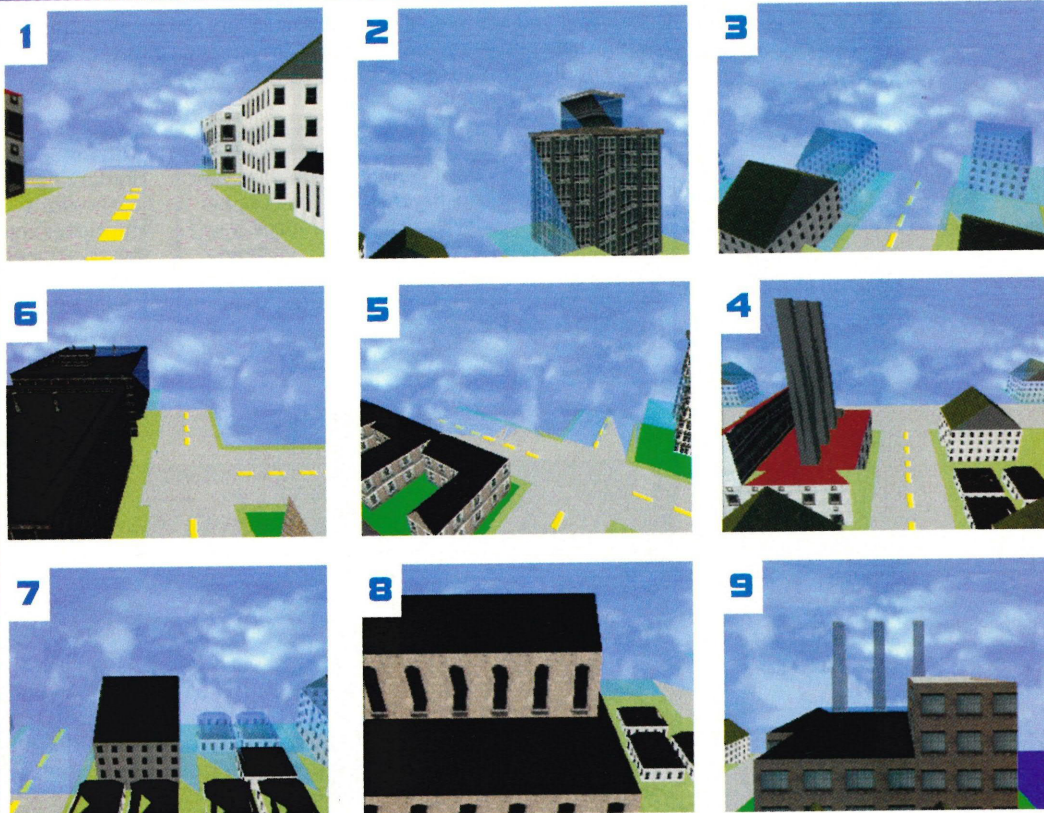


PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

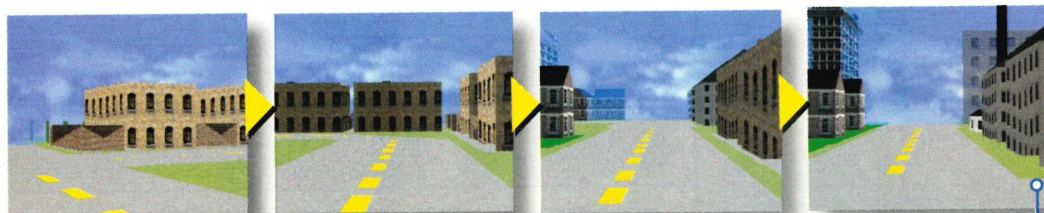
As well as the standard road system, you will need to link up with other cities if you want to encourage trading and expand your empire. Airports, rail tracks, harbours and motorways all become available as the game progresses. Also on offer are underground networks, although these are expensive to install once your city is reasonably established. Once you've connected with the adjoining cities, you will notice they start to grow very quickly as people are now attracted to them from outlying areas.



TAKE A HIKE



The only feature not on the original PC version is this 3D viewing option. This allows you to take a ride through the streets from a first person perspective as seen in the *Theme Park* conversion. Although it's hard to tell at first, you are actually treated to an accurate tour of your city, even if all the people who lived there have mysteriously disappeared.



MORE A GHOST TOWN THAN A SIM TOWN.

HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

Using the terrain generator, it's possible to customise your city as much as you like. Bulldoze the mountains, wipe out the forests and create your own lakes and rivers. Being completely egotistical, we decided to build a city around our initials... good innit?



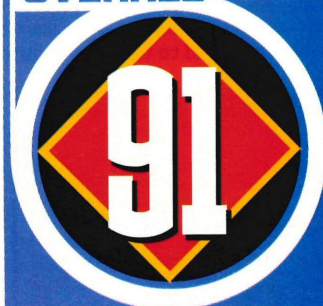
COMMENT

KATE

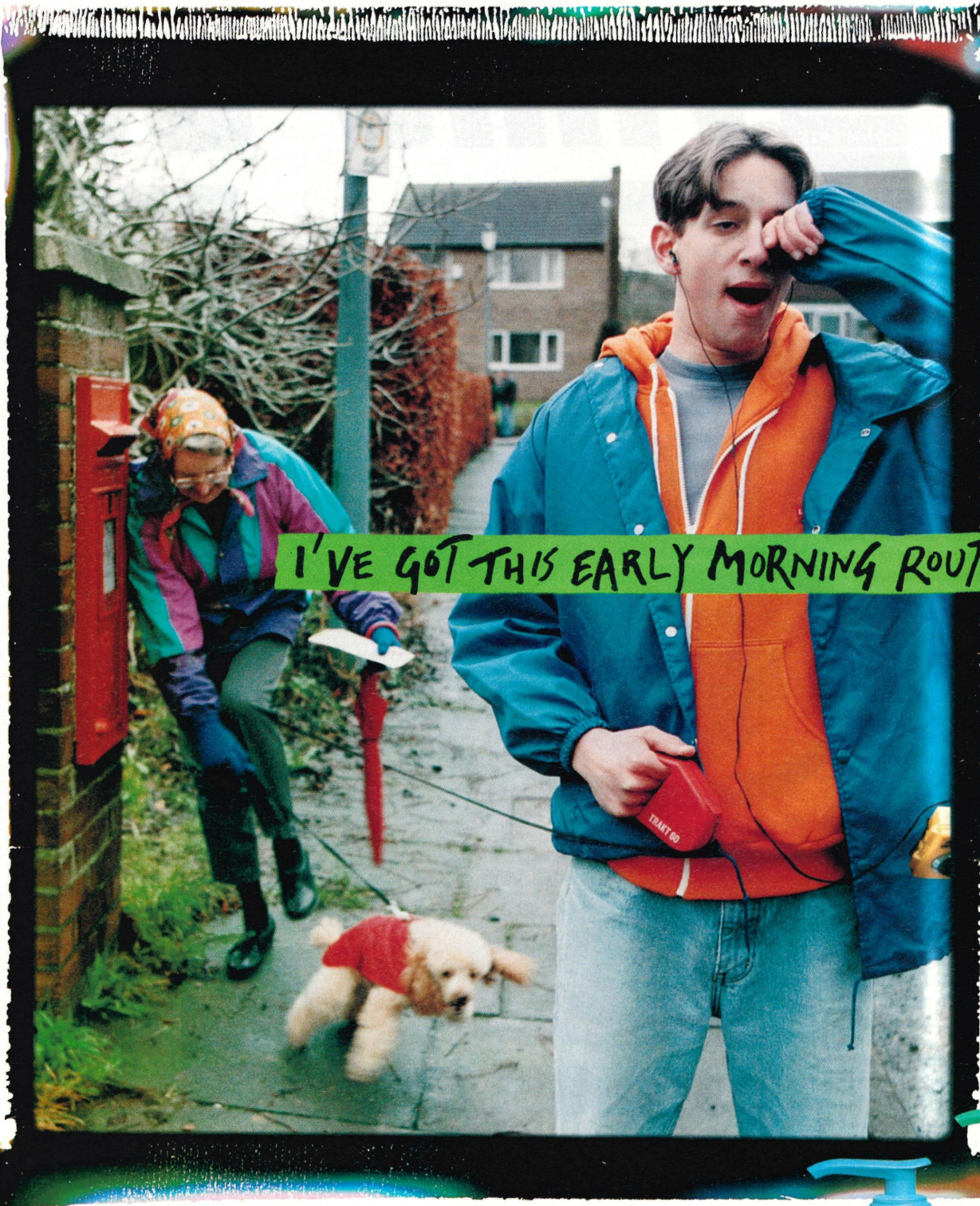
There's no real middle ground with a strategy game such as this — they fall into the 'love or hate' category with a sense of depth, which can be off-putting to the casual games player. As a conversion from the original PC code, it's extremely accurate, but sadly the cut-scenes and FMV sequences are totally gone. The 'drive through', a new feature in this conversion, comes across as a tad unnecessary and, as with the same idea in *Theme Park*, appears to be a token use of the PlayStation's 3D capabilities just because they are there. Although the city is representative of your main blue-print, this is a routine most people will only want to see once — preferring to get into the superbly deep gameplay. Aside from that, it is still *Sim City*. I loved it on the PC and I love it on the PlayStation. Not since *X-Com* has there been a game as engrossing as this. Maxis' first foray into the PlayStation arena shows them doing what they do best of all — creating ground-breaking games which anyone with even the slight hint of megalomania will find thoroughly stunning.

RATING

GRAPHICS	78
ANIMATION	80
SOUND FX	80
MUSIC	79
LASTABILITY	90
PLAYABILITY	93
OVERALL	91



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I CLEAN MY FACE WITH **OXY DAILY WASH** EVERY MORNING BECAUSE I DON'T WANT SPOTS. IT CLEARS MY PORES OF THE MUCK AND GREASE THAT CAUSES THEM. **SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM!**



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 3

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PLAYERS 1



Einsteins had a theory. Well actually he had quite a few, but one of his most famous was his theory on time travel. He surmised that were it possible to travel faster than the speed of light then it would be theoretically possible to journey through time – to either the future or the past. Since then scientists the world over have argued the possibilities. It seems there are many paradoxes involved in potential time travel. For example, if a man travelled back in time to before he was born, and killed his own father, he would presumably wink out of existence never having been conceived. However, if this were the fact, how could he have travelled back and committed the murder? Time travel has also captured the hearts and minds of the world of entertainment. The very fact of the limitless possibilities of going back to the future has been an inspiration to authors and film-makers alike, and once made a certain fresh faced young actor very rich indeed. Well, now it's the turn of the video games industry to cash in on the big bucks, combining the intricate paradoxes of spanning the centuries, with the infinite paradoxes of special combination button pressing that you only seem to be able to master after a long session at the local pub. For Electronic Arts this idea provided the ideal platform for a new action adventure – *Time Commando* – where the hero is blasted through time to do battle with a multitude of enemies from the stone age to the futuristic age of computing.

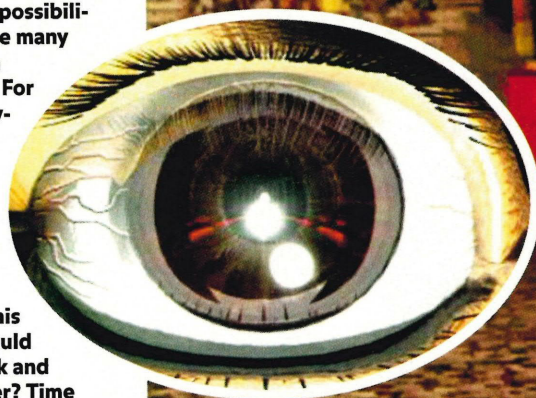
PREHISTORIC AGE

The home of Neanderthal man, this level is a good steady introduction to the skills you'll need to master if you're going to survive. You'll meet cavemen, sabre-toothed tigers, monkeys and bears as you battle it out using an assortment of sticks, stones and clubs.

Time Com

QUANTUM LEAP

Stanley is just an ordinary computer repair man with a passion for body-building, until one day everything goes wrong. There he was, minding his own business, when one of the light-speed processors at the XYZ Corp goes wrong. A spatio-temporal sphere hundreds of miles wide engulfs the computers core, sucking a rather well-built young lady into another dimension. Stanley's job? To enter the sphere, shut down the computer, and rescue the girl – of course!



TICK TOCK

HMMM.. A LARGE AXE? SOMETHING TELL'S ME I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE!

It's a race against time, quite literally, as our hero battles his way through the ages collecting memory chips to repel the virus.



ANCIENT ROME

Ahh...what a lovely setting. Beautiful women, graceful architecture – unfortunately it's totally deadly, so no sightseeing for you!



mando

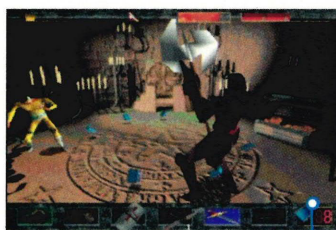
NOW, NOW BOYS...

The intelligent combat system makes *Time Commando* really refreshing to play. Using your wits, it's possible to avoid quite a bit of the fighting. This can be done in several ways. By backing your opponents towards a precipice you can watch as they plunge to their death. It is also possible to get them to fight each other. When you are confronted with two enemies at once, stand between them until they strike, then quickly hop backwards out of the way. Now you can just stand back with a loaded weapon ready to finish off the survivor as they fight it out amongst themselves.



20TH CENTURY BATTLEFIELD

Having survived the western era, you get to do a Kate Adie, scrambling through the bunkers in war-torn Europe. Your weaponry is getting ever more powerful as you grab a sack full of grenades and a tommy-gun to see off this lot.



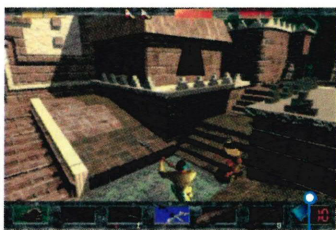
MEDIAEVAL EUROPE

Advances in technology make you weapons more powerful as you move along. Unfortunately your enemies gain the same benefits – and they have invented armour!



FEUDAL JAPAN

They might be wearing pyjamas, but these karate kickers are no pushover. Watch your back, or you are likely to find you have a poison-tipped fan sticking into it before long.



AGE OF CONQUISTADORS

Plenty of swashbuckling aboard the pirate ship. You'll get the first gun here, but be careful or you'll be in trouble as you try to reload.



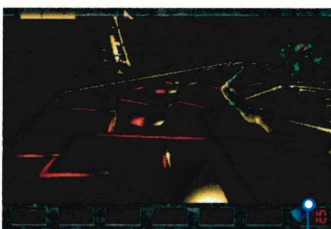
CLASSIC WESTERN

Time progresses again, as does your capacity to kill – and be killed. This wild western town is no place to be unless you have a loaded six-shooter on your hip.



THE FUTURE

Menacing robots are your problems here. Get as many bonus weapons as possible. Only one thing will get you through – sheer fire-power combined with plenty of guts!



COMPUTER WORLD

Run the gauntlet over a disintegrating platform to enter the computer. The virus is personified by evil looking beasts to be kicked, punched and blasted into oblivion.



COMMENT

STEVE

Time Commando is a real oddity.

It looks superb, is instantly appealing to play, and is one of the most novel slants on the beat 'em up and shoot 'em up genres I have played. In terms of variety, it is stunning. The worlds are varied, and the armed inhabitants within each become steadily more intelligent ensuring the game offers a constant challenge as more weapons are added to the mix. My biggest problem with *Time Commando*, however, is the slightly unwieldy controls. Any game that drops the player into a fully interactive environment cannot leave them struggling to punch or shoot someone when urgency is needed. *Time Commando* has a horrible habit of doing this, and the imprecise nature of the fighting scenes proved initially frustrating. That said, perseverance brings its own rewards, and quite frankly I really enjoyed my time with *Time Commando*. Progression through time adds more and more to the plot, and also give Adeline a chance to flex their graphical muscle. If the control method had been a little more refined, I'd recommend *Time Commando* like a shot but, as it stands, it's a slightly flawed jewel.

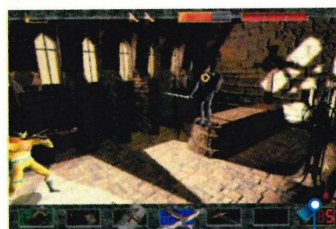
'AVE SOME OF THAT!

There's an incredible fifty different weapons to master during the course of this game, from sticks and stones to high tech lasers. Each one handles very differently, and knowing which one to use when is the key to completing a level.



STICKS AND STONES

In the early levels you'll get the most rudimentary of weapons. Stones are great for long distance shots, but the best weapon to use is the small club.



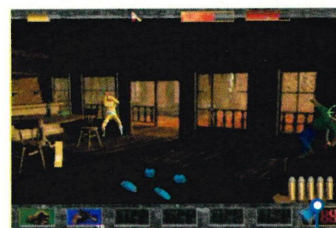
KNIVES AND FORKS

Technology progresses with time and you get some slightly more substantial weapons. Short swords, daggers, forks and shields – with an awesome cross-bow for maximum damage.



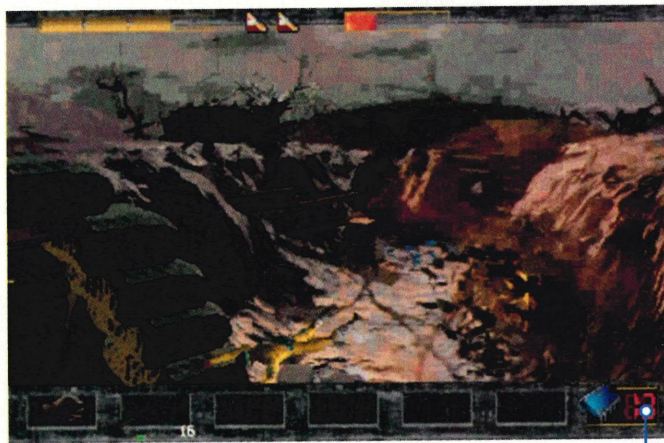
SWORDS AND MACHETES

During the Conquistador stage you'll be offered a larger selection of swords and axes, together with a your first basic gun and a rather nifty blow pipe.



WHIPS AND SPURS

If you fancy yourself as a closet John Wayne then grab your six-shooter and head for Dodge City. Throughout the wild west level you will get to use a range of guns with varying power.



GUNS AND GRENADES

More guns! Bigger guns! And grenades too. Probably the most satisfying level in terms of violent weaponry is war-torn Europe.

DEADLY LASERS

Plenty of electronic fire-power can be wielded through the futuristic level. Hand-held lasers are the most versatile, allowing freedom of movement to dodge incoming attacks.



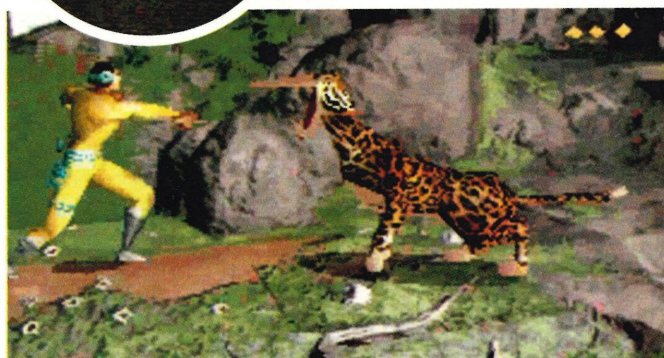
FISTS AND FIRE-BALLS

The final test, and you've miraculously learned a bunch of new combination hits and moves. Your overall arsenal is smaller, but you're athletic flip-flaps and cartwheels are quite deadly.



EXCUSE ME... DO I KNOW YOU?

Throughout the different levels you'll meet over eighty historical enemies, each with their own style of combat. As you progress they become more skilled as better weaponry is made available to both you and them. The end of level bosses often require a special weapon to finish them off, so discovering where all the secrets are hidden becomes essential. There's also some tricks to make life more bearable – taking out the horseman early on in the Rome level will send the four guards that accompanied him running for the hills.



COMMENT

KATE

At first I wasn't really sure

whether or not I liked this game. Getting used to the directional controls was a right pain, and the weaponry and moves you have to begin with are somewhat limited. However, once I got through the first level I began to have some serious fun. Graphically it's very slick and impressive – the scrolling camera style is reminiscent of *Fade to Black*. Nevertheless, the pre-rendered backgrounds are completely unique to this game and give it a far more tangible quality than Delphine's classic adventure. The only thing I found slightly annoying was the ethereal chime that indicates when you're by a location that hides a bonus. This noise often happens several seconds after passing the spot, at which time the camera has scrolled on past and you are basically stuffed. Having said this, the chances are you won't get past a level the first time out so you'll have plenty of time to pick up the bonus next time around. After a slow start *Time Commando* gave me hours of great entertainment and a very sore thumb.

RATING

GRAPHICS	82
ANIMATION	80
SOUND FX	78
MUSIC	79
LASTABILITY	79
PLAYABILITY	87
OVERALL	81

81

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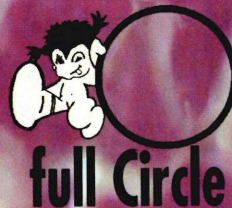
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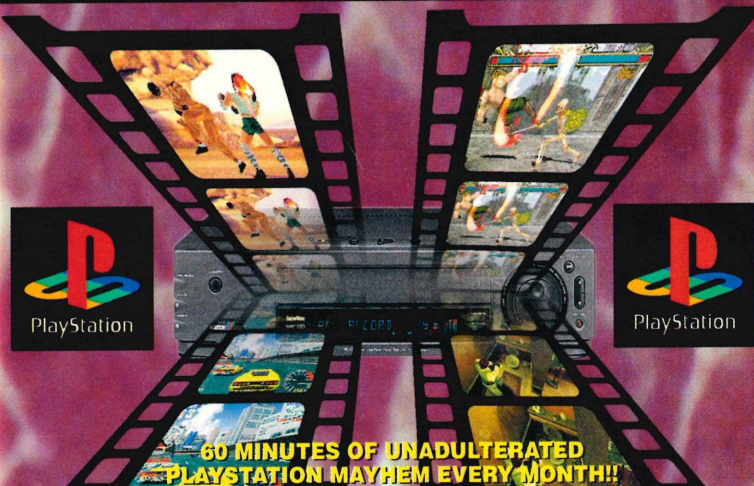


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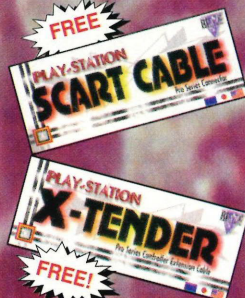
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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE
CONTINUES: FIVE
SKILL LEVELS: ONE

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

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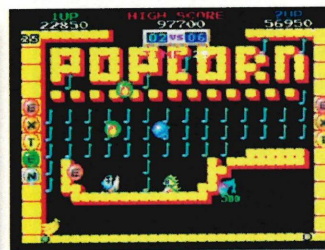
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PLAYERS 1-2

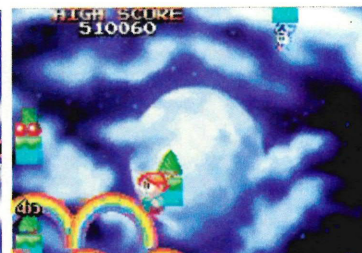


he story behind this latest trip down video game memory lane is a convoluted one to say the least. We first got wind of Acclaim's plans for a *Bubble Bobble* trilogy a year or so back, when we learned that Probe were converting all three of Taito's *Bub* and *Bob* trilogy for inclusion on one PlayStation CD. However, as the coding progressed we were shown the first fruits of the development time in an arcade-perfect conversion of the first in the series, *Bubble Bobble* — but learned Acclaim had decided to omit the third game, *Parasol Stars*, from the collection. As such, the *Bubble Bobble* trilogy was hastily renamed *Double Bubble Bobble*, with Acclaim pairing arcade-perfect conversions of both *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands* to tie in with the current *Bub* and *Bob* renaissance started with *Bust-a-Move 2* and the general trend of retro gaming. But in the latest twist of a collection which makes an episode of *Savannah* look simplistic, it transpires that Probe have farmed the *Rainbow Islands* out to Graftgold who have duly created two versions of the game for the CD, with the second game now represented by an identical port of the original PCB and a version with shaded sprites and detailed backdrops.

As with the majority of Taito's coin-ops, the conversions are linked by a storyline which runs throughout the games. Starting with *Bubble Bobble*, *Bub* and *Bob* are two happy little chaps whose homeland has been taken over by the evil Baron Von Blubba. Von Blubba has kidnapped *Bub* and *Bob's* parents — while our two heroes have been transformed into dinosaurs. Game scenarios being what they are, though, the pair have become have the ability to blow bubbles from their mouths — which conveniently becomes a key weapon in the attack against Baron Von Blubba. Eventually, Von Blubba meets his match and the pair revert to their human forms, just in time for a second invasion, but where rainbow-producing skills replace the old bubbling skills...



Bubble Bobble Pack

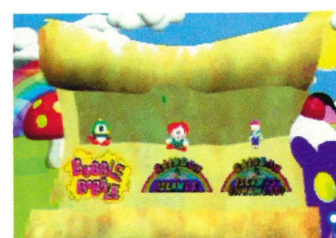
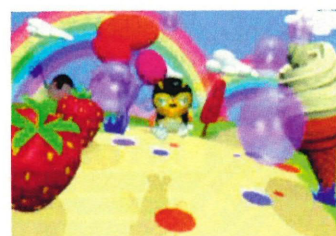
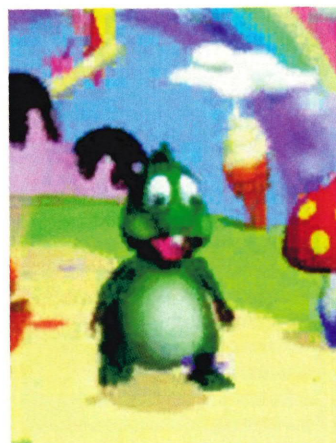
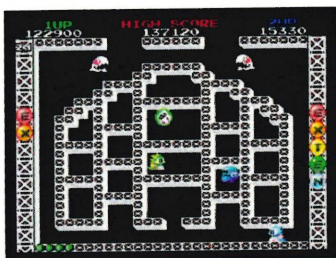


WHEN BUB BEGINS HE CAN ONLY FIRE A SINGLE RAINBOW AT A TIME. BY COLLECTING VARIOUS POWER-UPS HE CAN INCREASE THIS TO THREE!

HUBBLE BUBBLE...

Bub and *Bob's* first outing takes place across a number of single-screen locations, each of which are littered with decoratively-placed platforms and ledges. Control over the two heroes is simplicity itself with the Dpad sending them scuttling left and right, while the facia buttons are used to make them jump and blow bubbles. No sooner have the pair landed on a screen, then Von Blubba's cohorts appear and duly begin legging it around the screen. Blubba's henchmen take the form of ghosts, hooded villains, robot and antenna-sprouting fur balls, and contact with these is fatal, removing one of the pairs' three lives. However, the key to the game is mastery of *Bub* and *Bob's* bubble-blowing prowess, as spewing a stream of bubbles at an oncoming foe encapsulates them, while jumping up at the stricken meanie and popping the bubble with the spikes on the *Brontosaurus's* back sends them flying off screen, freeing them from Von Blubba's control. As soon as the screen is cleared, the pair then move on to the next, and the path to Von Blubba is reduced.





THERE'S AN ENHANCED VERSION OF RAINBOW ISLANDS AS WELL AS THE OTHER CONVERSIONS.

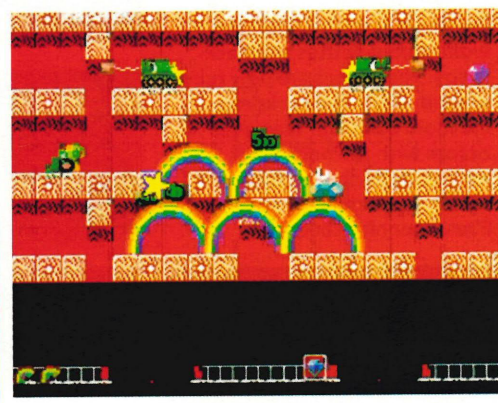
SOMEWHERE OVER...

Back in their human form, Bub and Bob's adventures continue as their new home – the titular Rainbow Islands – come under siege from a series of large boss creatures. The old-style single-screen levels are now replaced by vertically-scrolling stages, each of which are based on a graphical theme and inhabited by a host of creatures reflecting the look. Bub or Bob begin the game at the bottom of each stage, and their basic aim is to climb to the top while avoiding contact with the invariably deadly creatures. A rough map of the stage is shown at the start of each section, and at the top of each stage's final level awaits one of the seven bosses. For their second adventure Bub and Bob's bubble-blowing skills have been replaced by the ability to produce a number of rainbows, and these serve a dual purpose of both a handy platform to climb on and to kill or stun creatures it touches or encloses. Similarly, if Bub and Bob jump on to one of their rainbows, it drops from the screen, killing anything in its path.

COMMENT

ALEX

So far I think the retro scene has been a little disappointing but at last this should all change. I remember *Bubble Bobble* as being one of the most playable platformers ever – it still is, and while it may not have the graphical finesse of many of today's it's still infinite more enjoyable than the likes of *Johnny Bazoocatone*. Similarly *Rainbow Islands* is immensely addictive, and while it's slightly easier and therefore doesn't have the same lasting appeal of *Bubble Bobble*, the enhanced version included in the pack makes up for the original's lack of graphical punch. Even though the *Bubble Bobble Pack* only features two games as opposed to the six offered by *Namco Museum*, this still makes for considerably attractive package for veteran gamers.



CLOSE TO HAND

Both games are renowned for their secret bonuses and plentiful power-ups, with a number of themes running through the titles. Bub and Bob's first mission introduces icons which could enhance the pairs' abilities, while the sequel continues the trend but makes some of the game's secrets incredibly tricky to uncover...

RAINBOW ISLANDS



GEMS:

The gemstones are available in a number of colours and are arranged in order at the bottom of the screen. They are collected by dropping a rainbow on certain monsters and depending on which part of the screen the creature is in when it dies. Collecting them in sequence from left to right offers a huge reward.



RED POTS:

The best power-up within the game. The red pots add an extra rainbow to Bub or Bob's range, up to a maximum of three.



YELLOW POTS:

In keeping with the pot's role in enhancing the pairs' rainbow skills, the yellow urn doubles their rainbow-producing speed.



TRAINERS:

Found occasionally in *Bubble Bobble*, the trainers make the pair faster on the move.



RED STARS:

Explode when touched, scattering deadly stars in every direction.



YELLOW STARS:

Slightly more limited than the red stars because the shrapnel they produce only goes up screen.

BUBBLE BOBBLE



UMBRELLA:

Appears randomly but, if touched, allows the pair to bypass five stages.



E-X-T-E-N-D:

Coloured letters drift around the screen, spelling EXTEND. If all six are found, a bonus screen is unveiled and the current level skipped.



LAMP:

One of the more common icons, and one which doubles the speed of the recipient's bubble speed.



SHEPHERD'S CROOK:

Seems to make no difference at first, but on completing a level a huge bonus drops from above, and is worth in excess of 50,000 points.



LIGHTNING BUBBLES:

Marked with a lightning bolt, these special bubbles unleash a deadly energy bolt in the opposite way to which the character is facing.



FIRE BUBBLES:

These bubbles have a flame flickering within them. When popped, the fire drops on to the nearest platform, igniting it and killing anything it touches.



WATER BUBBLES:

Similar to the fire bubbles, but the water within sloshes across the screen, killing anything it comes into contact with.

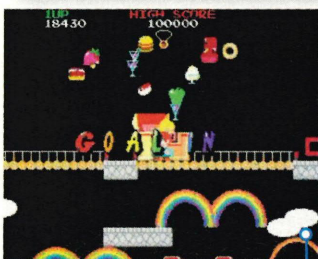
SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

On booting the CD, a rendered introductory sequence introduces the characters as a parchment floats through the worlds of *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands*. As it comes to an end, the three games are duly offered, with the character sprites highlighted as each is selected. Instead of Acclaim's initial plans to include *Parasol Stars* (the weakest of the trilogy), two versions of *Rainbow Islands* make up the number – with the updated version boasting an 'enhanced' moniker. In terms of level design the pair are identical, with the main addition being a lick of paint to the original's eight-colour sprites and backdrops. The sprites are now fully shaded, while the backdrops are more colourful than ever before with the once plain white clouds now replaced by softer, more realistic versions. File under nice touches.

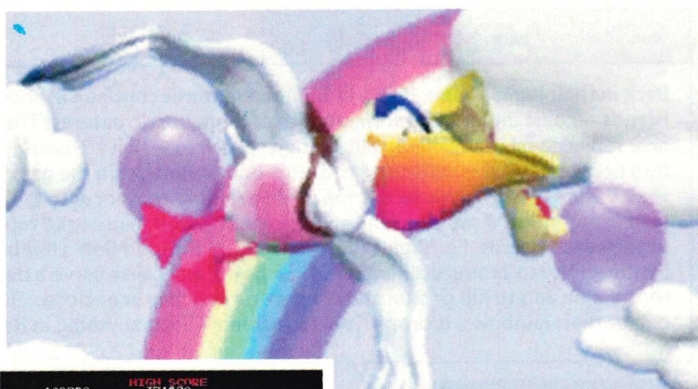
NEW RAINBOW



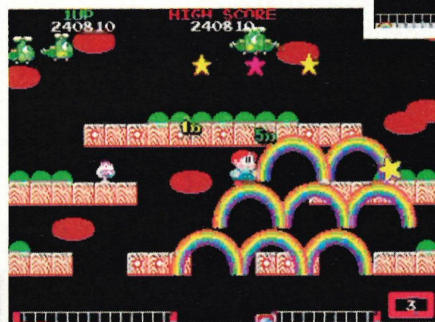
OLD RAINBOW



BOUNTY GALORE AS BUB SCORES!



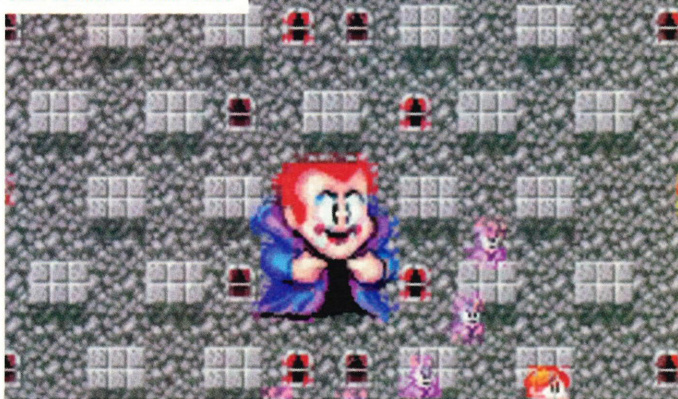
COMPARED TO THE ENHANCED RAINBOW ISLANDS, THE ORIGINAL LOOKS BLAND.



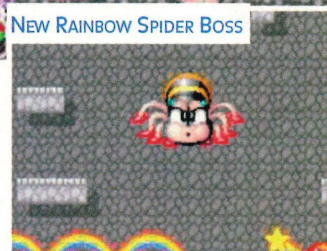
ABOVE AND BEYOND

By the time *Rainbow Islands* was released (1984), end-of-level bosses were common within the video game fraternity. Whereas *Bubble Bobble* used Von Blubba as its final adversary, *Rainbow Islands* featured a boss for each of its seven worlds. As with the worlds, the bosses follow each stage's graphical theme, with the first level based on insects, the next on military vehicles, while the rest of the game is made up of toy worlds, horror movies, and past Taito games. The latter is one of the best levels within the game with the many nasties based on Taito's *Breakout* clone, *Arkanoid*. The level reuses coloured blocks instantly recognisable from the coin-op (well, recognisable if you're an old fart who can remember it) and the final boss is Doh, the Easter Island statue who acted as the bad guy in *Arkanoid*.

NEW RAINBOW VAMP BOSS



OLD RAINBOW SPIDER BOSS



NEW RAINBOW SPIDER BOSS

COMMENT

STEVE

The retro trend continues, with Acclaim mining into Taito's back catalogue and emerging with two of the greatest platform games of all time. While *Bubble Bobble* has dated a great deal, it is still eminently playable, with the later levels demanding a mixture of reflexes and skill not seen in the majority of today's releases. Similarly, *Rainbow Islands* is every bit as good as I recall, with just the right mix of skill and luck needed and seven levels which will test even the greatest platform veteran. The inclusion of two versions of *Rainbow Islands* seems a bit pointless, as with the exception of a lick of paint, the level maps and alien positions are identical making one of the two slightly redundant. Even though the third game, *Parasol Stars*, was the weakest of the three, it's a pity it never made the final code as the enhanced version of *Rainbow Islands* comes across as an afterthought as opposed to a necessary inclusion – perhaps a way to justify the game's price? That said, this is one of the best retro collections to grace the PlayStation so far.

RATING

GRAPHICS	78
ANIMATION	67
SOUND FX	65
MUSIC	73
LASTABILITY	84
PLAYABILITY	85
OVERALL	84



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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

PRICE £44.95

BY VIRGIN

PLAYERS 1



he genesis of a new video game character is one of the most troublesome periods a game designer will ever experience. As detailed in last issue's feature, video game history is littered with an assortment of heroes who fell at one of the many hurdles expectant console owners place to divert less than perfect game stars. Any attempt to add humour, for example, may leave a character open to ridicule, as displayed in *Gex* where the reptilian hero bored the user rigid with Americanised 'gems' every time he moved. Similarly, while there are a number of essential moves a hero must have access to, any attempt to deviate from the norm or over-egg the control pudding may result in a game deemed far too unwieldy to warrant prolonged play. *Johnny Bazookatone* anybody? No, didn't think so.

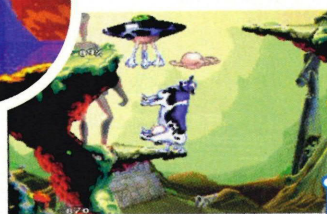
Every now and then, though, a game comes along that fulfils all these requirements and, against all odds, positions itself alongside the established platform greats of Mario and Sonic. One such character/game is *Earthworm Jim*. Created by California-based Shiny Entertainment, whose past credits include everything from *StarQuake* on the ZX Spectrum through to *Cool Spot* and *The Jungle Book* across the 16bit consoles. Shiny used their platform prowess to create a game that combined the said humour, ease of control and a handful of new additions with ease. With such a pedigree behind him, Jim was everything that gamers wanted: eminently controllable and, in addition to running and jumping moves, he was given fantastic weapons and backdrops to interact with more than past platform outings. As befits a successful game hero, the toy and cartoon spinoffs soon followed and although Shiny subsequently laid Jim to rest, his spirit still lives on through a series of 32bit conversions from PlayMates — as seen in this all-new PlayStation conversion...

Earthworm Jim

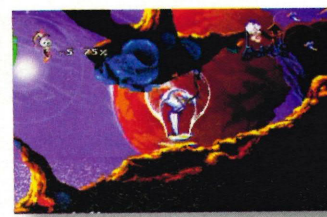
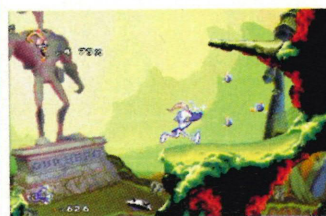


UP AND ATOM

The length of our hero's five lives are determined by an energy bar which is whittled down from its initial 100% by contact with the plentiful enemy and their firepower. Through the course of the game, Jim's energy levels will come under attack from handbag-waving grannies, flying udders, bendy straws, mobile filing cabinets, and sumo wrestlers fired from cannons. Should it be reduced to nothing, an animation plays showing the suit rejecting Jim's limbless form, and the player is invited to try again. Thankfully, Jim's search for the exit also brings him into regular contact with what appear to be blue molecules. If Jim collects these, his health is replenished to the tune of 20%, while the rarer red molecules go one better and fully replace any missing health.



LETTING GO OF THE COW INVITES THE ALIENS TO TRY TO ABDUCT IT.



SEE JIM RUN, SEE JIM JUMP

Life was normal for Jim until he stumbled across a space suit which gave him super powers. However, the suit belongs to Pscrow, a black-feathered and blacker-hearted space villain and the two 16bit games followed the pairs' battles. This conversion of the second game begins with Jim on holiday on a vacation planet with his mate Peter Puppy. But with Pscrow also in the area, the suit's abilities soon come into play:

CLAMBER: If Jim misjudges a jump, he can then clamber back up the wall using his suit-powered finger-nails for grip.

CARRY: Whether it be oversized Hamster balls or a cow, Jim's strength is massively enhanced over that of normal worms.

SWING: Hidden within the suit's rucksack is a small green blob who doubles as a handy snot swing. A second press of the jump button activates the mucus device.

WHIPPING: A secondary swing option or an Indiana Jones-style weapon, the suit duly snatches Jim out and uses him as a handy whip.

ROPE SWING: This uses one arm of the suit for momentum, and then Jim's head to propel himself along. Bizarre, to say the least.

SALAMANDER SUIT: Donning a salamander skin suit, Jim is left to explore a series of maze-like stages – while the player struggles with *Asteroids*-style controls.

ROCKET: 'The Flyin' King' level sits Jim astride a mini-rocket as he attempts to bounce a balloon to the end of the stage using its nose cone.

PARACHUTE: The snot device in the backpack also doubles up as a handy parachute and inflates if the jump button is pressed on his descent.



TANGERINE DREAM

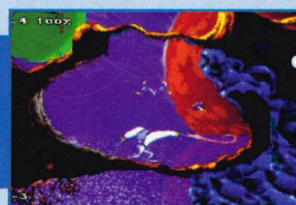
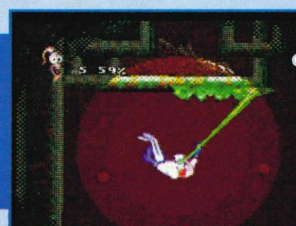
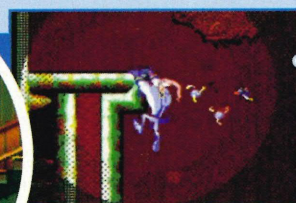
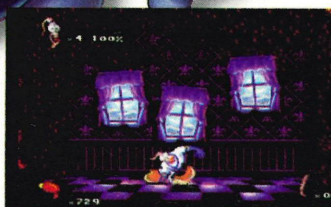
Earthworm Jim 2 is one of the most off-beat platform games to grace any machine. While behind its many graphical frills it still follows the traditional 'A to B' path of countless others of its kind – to call it a straightforward platform game is to do it an injustice. Jim's multi-level trek across the themed worlds within the game sees him adopting disguises, solving puzzles and carrying some of the strangest objects as he attempts to reach the exit. Jim starts the game with a simplistic stage called 'Anything but Tangerines' which introduces the run and jump basics prevalent throughout the game, and also contains the first examples of oddball humour. For example, hidden away at the top of the stage is a glass transporter which, if used, transforms the heroic worm to a bonus stage in which a Stannah Stairlift is used to reach the top of a large building. Dropping from the top of the building, though, are a handful of old ladies and if Jim is in their path, they land on his lap and beat him all the way back to the bottom. Similarly, having located the exit to the first stage, Jim is faced with a goldfish within a bowl, while the *Mortal Kombat*-esque 'Fight!' message appears. As the player pre-

pare for the battle, Jim casually pops his hand in the bowl and eats his opponent. Following this, Jim can soon be found rescuing cows from alien abductors, chasing doors, and legging it past deadly salt shakers. At one point, the intrepid worm also dons an eyeless Salamander suit and fumbles his way through what appears to be a many-tentacled stomach wall.

COMMENT

GARY

I don't have a particularly good history with 32bit platformers. I grimaced at *Johnny Bazooka* and groaned at *Mickey's Wild Adventure*. By far my biggest disappointment though was *Gex* and despite *Earthworm Jim 2*'s similarities (notably, the 'witticisms') this is a far superior game – because it's fun. There are limits to what a 2D platformer can do, but even Jim's traditional methods have a spark of novelty about them. Although there's *Crash Bandicoot* and *Pandemonium!* yet to come, this is a pretty good 2D platform game.





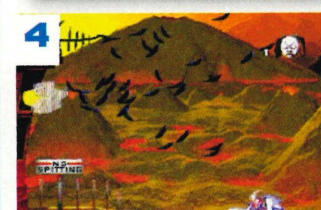
EMINENTLY COLLECTIBLE

In addition to his futuristic suit, Jim is also given a gun which is used to blow away any of Psychrow's many henchmen. Initially, the weapon is armed with just short of a thousand bullets, but more can be found in the shape of bullets and gun icons which litter the play area. Similarly, the gun can also be upgraded with homing missiles, a blinding smart bomb effect or a rather useful bubble gun if Jim stumbles into one of the relevant icons. The power-up theme is ever-present throughout the game, with cans of worms for extra lives (along with Jim heads), time bonuses, and energy-doubling sandwiches. By far the best extras, however, are the three coloured boards — marked with worms, the Earth and Jim's head respectively — which individually incite a "Groovy" sample from Jim, but collectively give the player a password at the end of the stage. Finding all three isn't always easy, though, but searching the far corners of the worlds for them is well worth the trouble.



ROUNDING UP

Breaking up the platform lunacy is a selection of bonus games which bear little relevance to the ongoing plot. Following an excursion fending off flying saucers or creating platforms by blowing chunks out of muddy walls, Jim may find himself engaged in a nonsensical quiz show, attempting to follow a series of *Simon*-style colour puzzles, or testing his strength in return for bonuses galore. The games are sheer lunacy at best, with the quiz show offering a bonus question for every worm they have collected during the previous stage — while the questions follow the lines of "Why is it best to leave a misery alone?" Discuss. By far the most common intermediate stage, however, is 'Peter's Puppies.' A variant on the old Game and Watch handheld systems, the player is given control over Jim, who is holding a huge marshmallow. To his left, Psychrow is tossing Peter's offspring in the air, while Peter himself watches aghast to the right. Via frantic weaving and diving, Jim's aim is to use the marshmallow to bounce the pups over to Peter, while simultaneously collecting the odd bonus. However, if Jim lets more than five go, the ungrateful Peter turns real nasty and attacks the hapless worm.



COMMENT

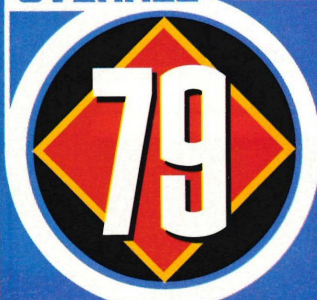
STEVE

The 16bit
*Earthworm
Jim* games

were a real breath of fresh air and, with the PlayStation still crying out for a really good platform hero, my hopes were high for Virgin's straight port from the original — hopefully it would inherit the 16bit game's playability along the way. While the conversion is impeccable, retaining the humour and attractive animation touches, some of the levels seem more protracted and frustrating than before — with some levels bordering on the positively irritating. Also the PlayStation version adds slight inertia to Jim's movements, making turns and accuracy harder than ever before, and emphasising just how instinctive the 16bit controls were. The differences in control aren't massive, but nevertheless they are particularly noticeable in levels which requires pixel-perfect positioning. Ultimately, *Earthworm Jim 2* on the PlayStation is still a fine platform game — easily showing *RayMan*, and company, the ropes — but the small faults in the control system prevent me from recommending it as an essential purchase.

RATING

GRAPHICS	83
ANIMATION	87
SOUND FX	82
MUSIC	84
LASTABILITY	79
PLAYABILITY	80
OVERALL	79





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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
CONTINUES: MEMORY CARD
SKILL LEVELS: 1

RELEASE	OUT NOW
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BY	HUMAN
PLAYERS	1-4

Hyper Final Match Tennis



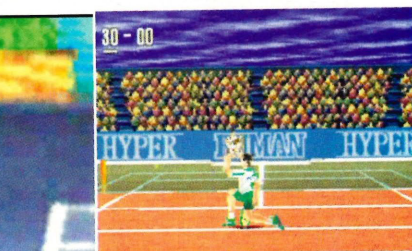
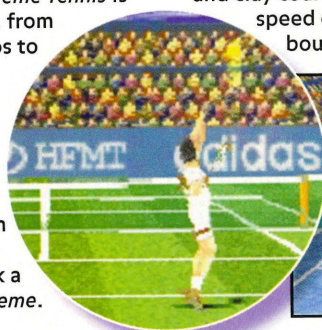
et again England's chances of winning a major sporting event have been dashed. Having watched in despair as Gazza and the lads were knocked out of Euro '96 by a badly taken penalty, just weeks later Britain's tennis hopeful, Tim Henman, is cruelly booted from centre court. But just as it seems the only thing we Brits are good at is drinking beer and guzzling lager, we've been given a second chance. Admittedly, there's no hope of turning back the clocks to retake Southgate's penalty, but at least we can relive the highs and lows of Wimbledon with *Hyper Final Match Tennis*.

On what is rapidly becoming an overcrowded court, with Codemaster's *Sampras Extreme Tennis*, *Power Serve Tennis* as well as a handful of import titles already serving for advantage, *Hyper Final Match Tennis* attempts to out-play the opposition by cramming in as many features as possible. Fancy a choice of singles or doubles? You got it. One-off exhibition games as well as a full-blown tennis tour? It's here. Loads of match venues and camera angles? Yup. A wide selection of players? Not really. While *Sampras Extreme Tennis* is chock full of competitors, from square-jawed German pros to a pimp wearing a purple suit and purple hat, there's are just a dozen players in *Hyper Final Match Tennis* – a healthy selection by no means, but when the competition is so fierce every minor niggles can make or break a game. 0-15, *Sampras Extreme*.



SMOKIN' ON GRASS

Each court surface has been faithfully recreated in *Hyper Final Match Tennis*, from the plush green lawns of Wimbledon to the hard concrete surface of Melbourne's Australian Open. As well as the obvious visual differences, the various surface types affect the play of the ball. The ball bounces high and fast on hard and clay courts, while playing on grass slows the speed of the game and also dampens the bounce of the ball.



LOUSY LINE-UP

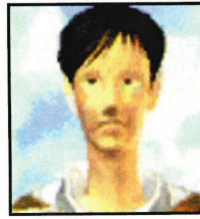
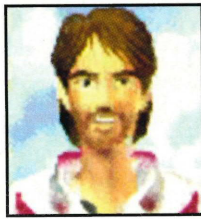
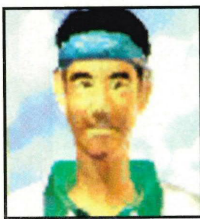
Okay, so the player line-up isn't as bloated as that of Wimbledon but there are 12 competitors to choose from, six male and six female. Although adopting fictional names they are quite obviously inspired by real-life tennis stars, including caricatures of Boris Becker, Pete Sampras and Steffi Graf. The players are true to life too, with Sampras' alter ego boasting a

super-fast serve and Becker proving he's still the most accurate player on the tennis circuit. Oddly, playing against a female player is a darn sight easier than competing against the more powerful blokes, as shots are less powerful and the computer opponent is more prone to making mistakes. So much for sexual equality, eh?

COMMENT

GARY

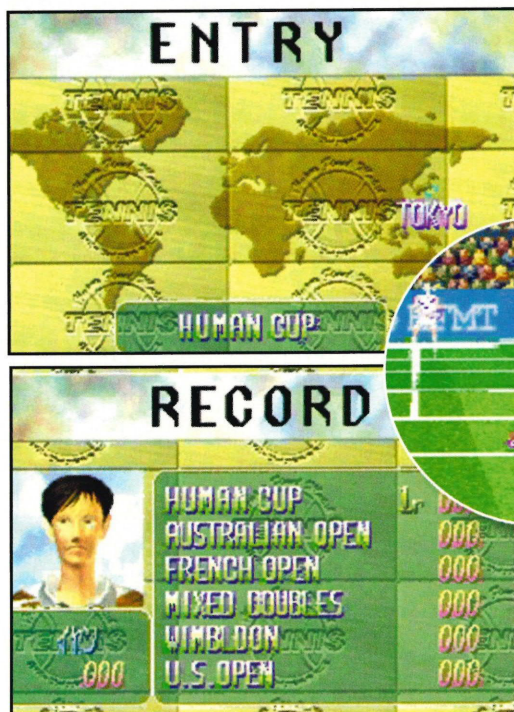
There's little to recommend this game, sadly. The best this offers are some rather jerky little sprites running to hit a ball and then diving to the floor at inopportune moments, while the CPU player acts as if he's won the lottery. *Hyper Final Match Tennis* lacks the vital ingredient for a good tennis sim – playability. This barely hits the tram line and should be declared well and truly out.



EXHIBITIONIST OR MARATHON PERFORMER?

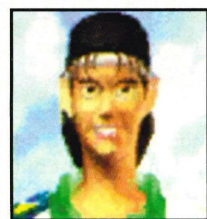
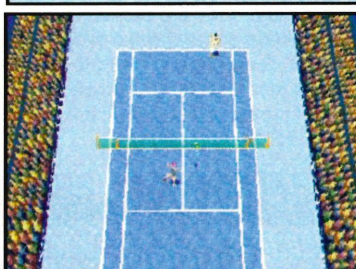
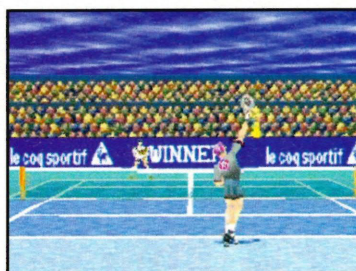
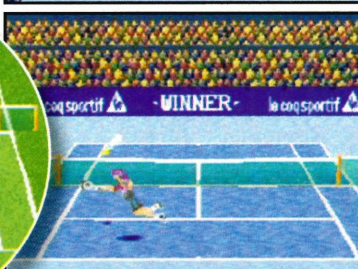
Hyper Final Match Tennis caters for quick, one-off games as well full-blown seasons, players choosing to enter an exhibition match or sign up for a world tour. Although the former is a straightforward game of singles or doubles on any court surface using any of the players, the world tour is much more involving. Kicking off with the Human Cup held in Tokyo, the player must first progress through the preliminary qualifying rounds before

working through to the final. Points are awarded for wins, before the tour continues to the Australian Open and then the French Open. A mixed doubles competition is then held in Montreal before the championship moves onto Wimbledon and eventually to the US Open. Even though each match is limited to one set, to win the tour players must compete in 36 separate games – thank goodness for the save option!



ANOTHER ANGLE

Ridiculous. It's the only word to accurately describe the number of camera angles featured in the game, from the top-down bird's-eye view (in which the players are so minuscule it's practically impossible to accurately aim a shot) to the low, behind-the-player angle that makes it very difficult to actually see the court. There are approximately half a dozen views in between, some which are functional and others that are visually great but less than usable.



COMMENT

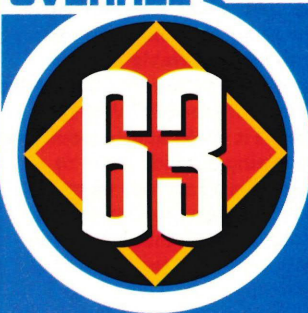
ALEX

Above all, a tennis game should allow

the player to choose their shots with ease, switching between lobbs and forehands quickly while accurately hitting the ball over the net. While *Sampras Extreme Tennis* managed this with a degree of competency, *Hyper Final Match Tennis* isn't so well endowed. While selecting a shot is simple enough, judging the direction and indeed the power of the strike is incredibly difficult as it's mainly dependent on the position of the player in relation to the ball. The long-distance views make this even more difficult, accurately hitting a ball little more than a pixel in size proving near on impossible. Of course, the closer camera angles rectify this problem to some extent, but then the visibility of the court, or rather the lack of it, is another of the game's underlying faults. The character animation is a little rigid, and the mannerisms of the players, such as a repetitive fist punch whenever a point is won, proves incredibly annoying. The rank outsider as opposed to the number one seeded *Sampras Extreme Tennis*.

RATING

GRAPHICS	80
ANIMATION	73
SOUND FX	78
MUSIC	72
LASTABILITY	70
PLAYABILITY	60
OVERALL	63





GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE
CONTINUES: NO
SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE SEPTEMBER

PRICE £TBA

BY VIRGIN

PLAYERS 1

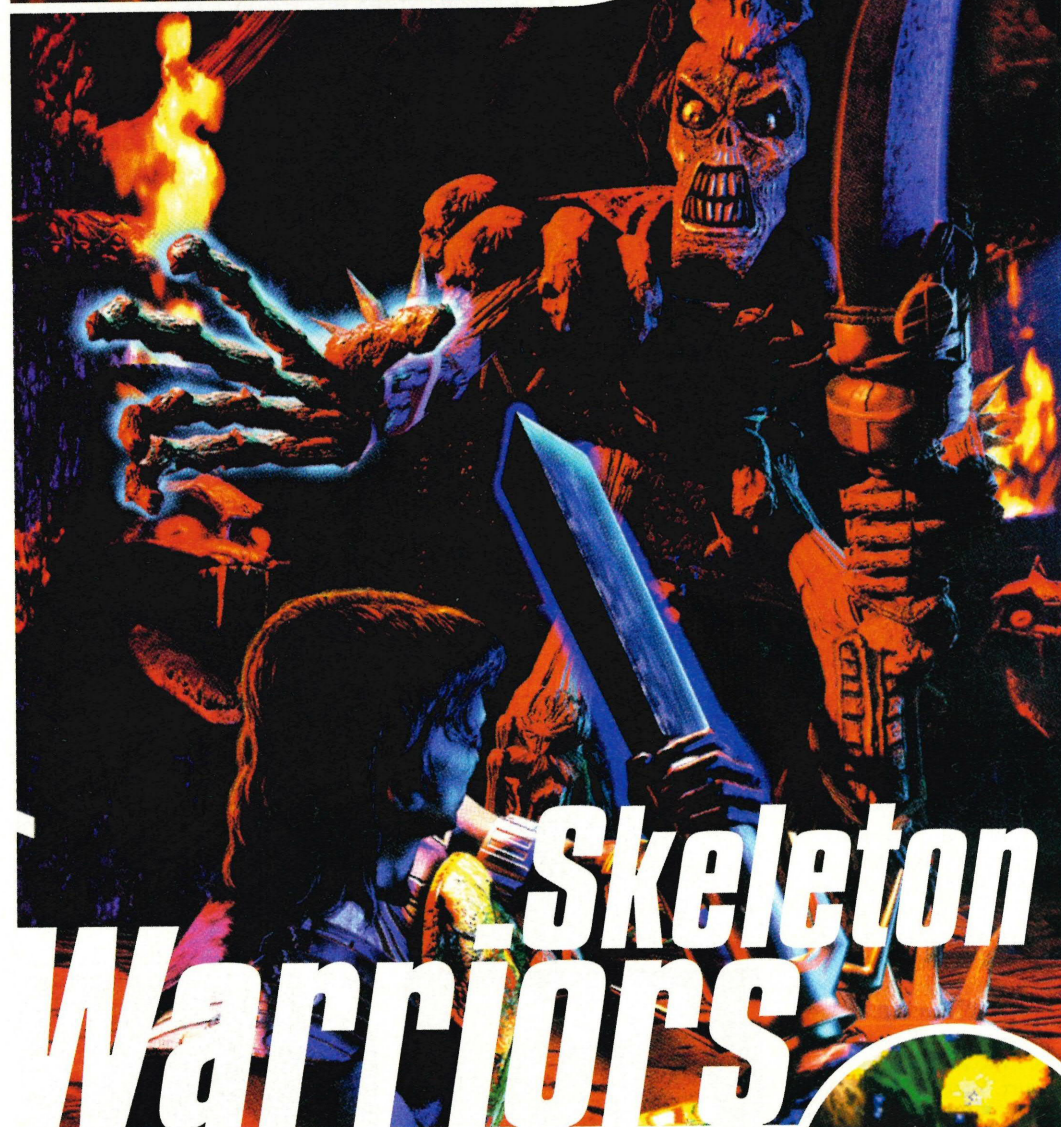
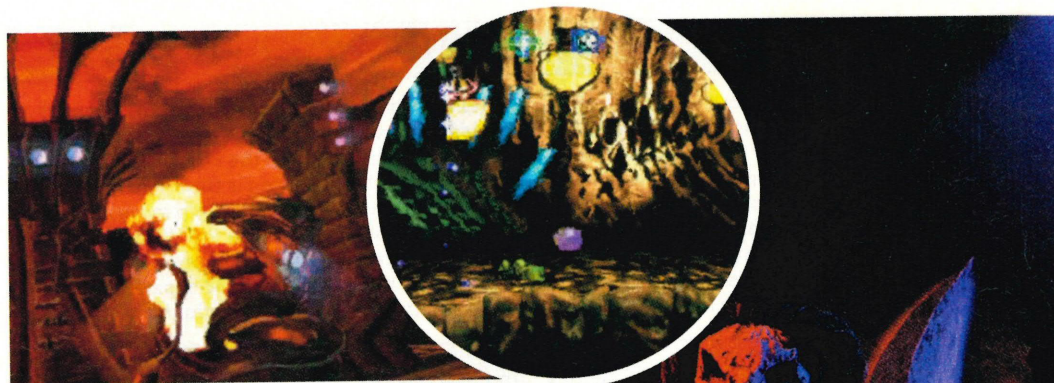


onsidering the amount of violence that seems to be prevalent in children's televi-

sion shows these days (almost as much as product placement, in fact), it's hardly surprising that the likes of *He-Man*, the *Power Rangers*, and now *Skeleton Warriors* go on to become hit computer games. And why not? After all, what better way to end a stressful day at the office than to plug in your PlayStation and knock seven bells out of everything that moves? Or indeed things that didn't move but nevertheless looked vaguely menacing. But the media is prone to speculating about the increased violence in our society being a result of what we are exposed to on television and in games. If that's the case, anyone playing Virgin's new scrolling platformer based on the sword and sorcery *Skeleton Warriors* cartoon should run out now to buy a sturdy cod piece and a broadsword. Based on the aforementioned hit children's television series, it throws the player into the fur-lined boots of Justin, whose mission is to recover a lost crystal and restore peace to his city. However, a curse is transforming the normally sedate villagers into skeletal beasts who act as soldiers to the villain of the piece, one Baron Dark - and the fact that they're actually innocent people beneath the bony exterior means that people remonstrating Virgin about the violence can be calmly told "ah, but nobody actually dies."

Nevertheless, the game offers a host of exploding skeletons to hack your way through, as well as the complimentary issue of undead beasts - not forgetting the obligatory dungeon settings with unidentifiable objects crawling up the walls. Sound like a familiar scenario? Well of course it is. What else would we be sitting our kids down to watch on a Saturday morning? But although the plot sounds like a hundred that have gone before it, does the game play have anything else to offer?

Read on...

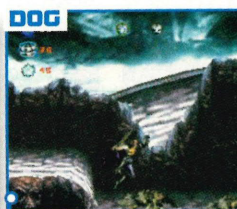


LITTLE BUGGERS

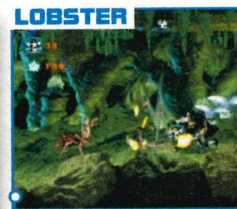
There's plenty of variety in the mutants you'll do battle with. For the most part, they are skeletal warriors of some description, but there's a few little pests thrown in to keep you on your toes. They don't do too much damage in a single hit, but they're hard to take out because of the erratic way they move and therefore quite dangerous. Let's face it, even a shuttlecock will kill you if it hits you repeatedly between the eyes at 100 miles an hour.



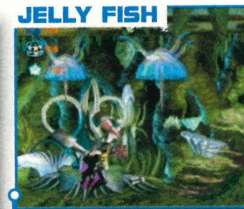
These swooping vultures try to snag your eyeballs...



While the dogs turn out to be a right pain in the butt.. literally.

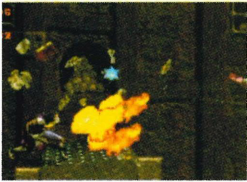


And there's never a pot of boiling water around when needed.



Who'd have guessed jellyfish droppings could be so deadly?





ONCE UPON A TIME

The gameplay is preceded by several minutes of impressive-looking intro. Unfortunately, it's damn near impossible to understand a word the narrator is saying. As with the television series, the plot revolves around the struggle of light against dark as Prince Justin battles with the mighty Baron Dark for possession of the all powerful Lightstar Crystal. As the game progresses you will take on four gruelling missions before your trigger finger finally drops off for good.

KEW GARDENS IT'S NOT! EVERY PLANT IS A KILLER!



COMMENT

STEVE

I only caught sight of the

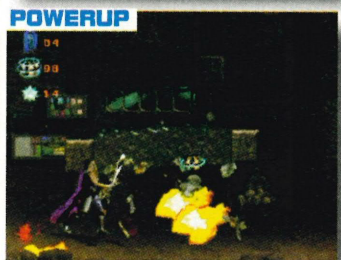
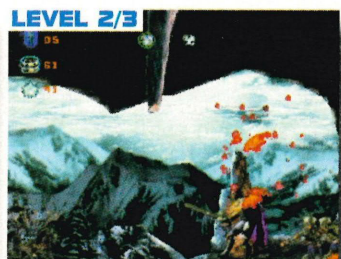
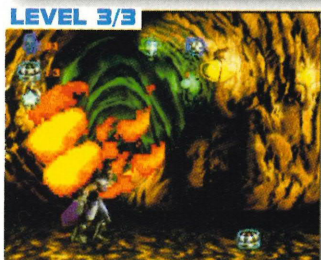
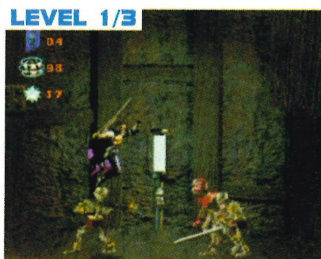
Skeleton Warriors cartoon on a Sunday once, so I'm no expert on how close this is to the series. However, I am knowledgeable enough on games to realise this is a poor cash-in. No imagination has gone into this rather samey hack and slash effort, with minimal variety to the levels, and a rather tedious task repeated against different backdrops. Although geared for the younger PlayStation owner, I feel the repetition will put even kiddies off.



WHAT? NO MACHINE GUNS?

Armed only with Justin's faithful sword, the player can also pick up a variety of power-ups and specials as reward for pasting the bad guys. Each skeletal foe you slay will leave behind either a crystal or a power-up token. Fail to pick up the former in time and your undead friend will pick up his scattered bones and come back at you for a second round — rather like Frank Bruno in that respect.

Power-ups include multiple shots, shields, homing mines and bouncing bombs, but unfortunately you can only carry two at a time so choose carefully which ones you collect.



COMMENT

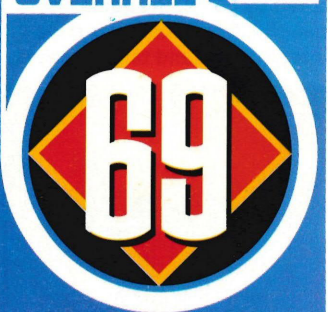
KATE

On the whole, *Skeleton Warriors*

is decidedly uninspiring. It's by no means a disaster, just nothing special. It's very similar in style to *Batman Returns* on the Super NES, and suffers from the same repetitive gameplay. The graphics are mediocre and dated, and the gameplay, while intensive, is far too samey throughout the mission. Although the enemy sprites are far too easy to kill, the sheer number will keep most players busy as they slash and swipe at a tidal wave of suicidal skeletons. But even the constant stream of meanies soon proves tedious as energy loss is often unavoidable, and there is no replay option. On the plus side, the sound effects are quite good, and the ambient *Omen*-style music is awesome if played through a pair of powerful headphones. We've seen a deluge of second rate platformers on the PlayStation recently, all dressed up in fancy graphics in an attempt to fool you into thinking you're playing a top game. With *Skeleton Warriors*, what you see is what you get — very average indeed.

RATING

GRAPHICS	72
ANIMATION	63
SOUND FX	87
MUSIC	90
LASTABILITY	76
PLAYABILITY	63
OVERALL	69



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE
CONTINUUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: N/A

RELEASE SEPTEMBER
PRICE £44.95
BY VIRGIN
PLAYERS 1-4

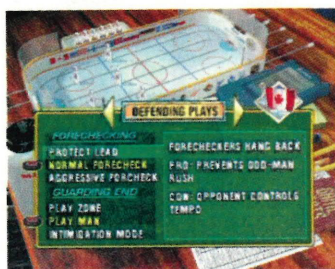


Ice hockey simulations are a perennial favourite across countless home formats, with Electronic Arts

starting the trend with their acclaimed NHL series for the Megadrive over four years ago. The sport itself makes it perfect fodder for a video game, as it incorporates speed, accuracy and skill on the player's part, and is considerably more frenetic than football while retaining the need for passing and shooting. Similarly, with the bulkier nature of the players due to their padded suits and control problems accentuated by the icy surface, battling inertia to turn on a sixpence goes hand in hand with the running battles with the opposition.

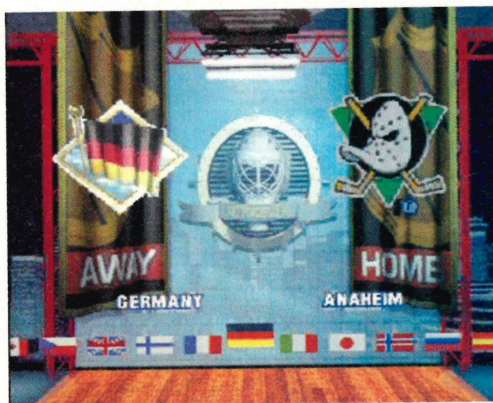
With EA canning their original plans for an NHL '96, it seemed PlayStation-owning ice hockey fans were unlikely to see a version of the sport for their machine. Quick to spot a gap in the market, both Sony and Virgin got their skates on (as it were), and following the release of the former's *NHL Game Day*, Virgin have finally made it to the rink with *Powerplay Hockey '96*.

Looking decidedly similar to EA's scuppered NHL title, *Powerplay Hockey '96* is viewed from the customary 'above and behind' view, with the game camera intelligently panning in and out of the action. The developers at Radical have packed as many features as their NHL licence will allow, with all the greatest US sides represented in terms of appearance and statistics, while international tournaments pits the likes of the mighty Canadian side against the relatively humble teams amassed by Sweden, England and Germany. Similarly, with the game secondarily sponsored by ESPN, the game also benefits from television-style intermissions and tactic screens.



Powerplay

TAKING SIDES

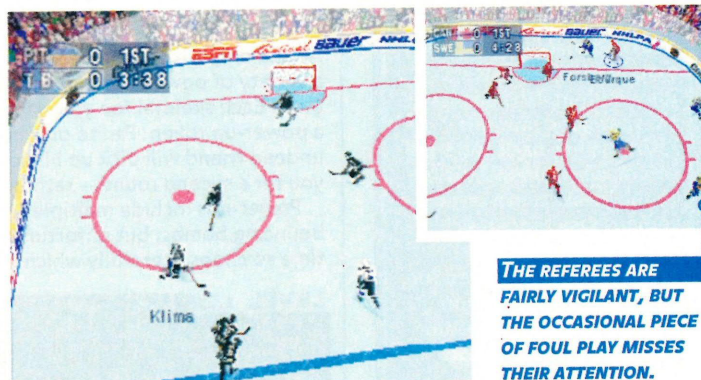


Before the teams take to the ice, the small matter of selecting a side must be made. With the NHL again lending their name to the game (like the NBA, they don't seem too choosy), Radical were given full use of the current season's statistic and team rosters, with Mario Lemieux and Wayne Gretzky among the more recognisable characters in the game. There are 42 teams, split evenly between sides from the US NHL League, including the likes of Vancouver and Florida, while the remainder are international sides, including puck-bashers from Italy, Spain and even good ol' Blighty. On choosing the team, some statistics can then be summoned, within which the teams are rated out of 100 across six major hockey factors, which take into consideration their defending skills, shot accuracy and passing abilities.

COMMENT

GARY

While I'd rather kick a real football around, or play tennis on a clay court that an electronic one, ice hockey seems somewhat safer and more engrossing as a console game than the real thing. *Powerplay Hockey '96* supplies a good bout of aggressive matches and once you've learned which teams are good and which are plain embarrassing, the game should keep you occupied for quite a long time. The variety of camera angles gets a bit hard to keep track of, but once you've learned to anticipate them, it all flows really nicely. The sprites aren't anything to write home about and by the nature of the game, it's quite easy to lose sight of the puck at inopportune moments, but overall, this is god, if unchallenging, fun.



THE REFEREES ARE FAIRLY VIGILANT, BUT THE OCCASIONAL PIECE OF FOUL PLAY MISSES THEIR ATTENTION.

ANOTHER CHANCE TO SEE

Actually getting the puck into the goal is harder than it sounds. The goal is tiny, while the suitably padded 'keeper ensures there's very little gap between him and the target. However, should a long hit sneak past and into the net, or a cunning pass across the goal to draw the 'keeper out while another attacker slams it home, most players are going to want to replay their greatest moments over and over again.



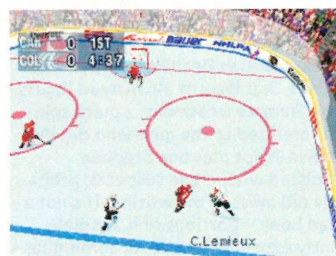
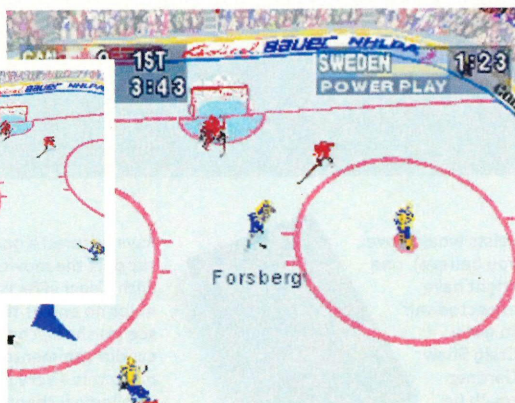
Hockey '96



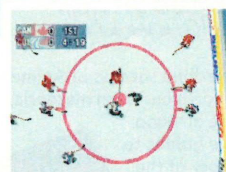
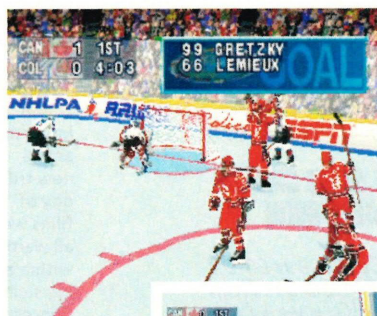
REVIEW

ON THIN ICE

In essence, ice hockey relies on two major abilities: passing the puck accurately, or hitting it as hard as possible towards the opposition's goal. *Powerplay Hockey '96* reflects this perfectly, with controls kept to a bare minimum but requiring more skill on the player's part than this implies. Passing is effected using the circle button while pressing the Dpad in the direction of the player to receive the puck — although care must be taken as veteran players will step in to intercept the pass rather than battle it out along the wing. Similarly, the square button is used for the majority of shots, but extra aspects such as power and the height of the shot are dependent on the speed the puck is moving when it is struck and the angle of the shot towards the goal. If the player is on the defence, though, these two buttons are used to tackle with differing levels of severity (although the referee is quick to penalise if a player is brought down with what he considers undue ferocity), while the X button switches control to the player nearest the puck.



THE CAMERA PANS AUTOMATICALLY TO COVER THE GAME.



FOUL PLAY

Ice Hockey is a notoriously violent sport, and *Powerplay Hockey '96* recreates its many fouls and altercations — although punch-ups between the offending players are conspicuous by their absence. Every game is overseen by an off-screen referee whose all-seeing eye is peeled for rough tackles, 'hooking' (where a player is tripped with the defender's stick), and general argy-bargy. A referee consigns the guilty party to the sin bins at the side of the screen where they will be made to sit out the game for a period of time. However, if a particularly brutal foul results in a lost goal opportunity or is so vicious as to deserve a heavier punishment, a penalty is awarded to the victim. Ice hockey's penalties, though, are harder to score from than those of, say, football, with the attacker given a full run up to the goal from the centre circle with only the 'keeper to beat.



COMMENT

STEVE

Ever since Sony's *NHL Face Off*, I

have become a die-hard of Ice Hockey games. When done well, they are one of the most playable sports simulations available, as the brutal nature of the sport coupled with the speed and timing needed to score makes it perfect video game fodder. Virgin's *Powerplay Hockey '96* is a brilliant example of the genre at its best, with simple yet comprehensive controls and all the rules you'd expect from a decent simulation. Graphically, *Powerplay Hockey '96* is no great shakes and bears more than a passing resemblance to EA's old 16bit *NHL* titles, but for playability it has got it just right. Tackling and shooting are easy to effect, and the pass button opens up both quick play and accurate interceptions, making for a very fast-paced game. The international and US sides further what could be a shallow game's lasting appeal, with the Canadian side just about impossible to beat. While offering nothing outstanding or new, *Powerplay Hockey '96* is a very playable incarnation of a fast and furious sport.

RATING

GRAPHICS	82
ANIMATION	76
SOUND FX	63
MUSIC	69
LASTABILITY	83
PLAYABILITY	86
OVERALL	85



Videos Comics

Our new, ongoing feature, which updates you on items of merchandise currently available that we believe will be of interest to PlayStation gamers everywhere.

BOOKS PRIMA'S PLAYSTATION SECRETS

PRICE: £9.99
RELEASED BY: Boxtree
RATING: ★★★★★

Prima's new publication *PlayStation Secrets* is self-billed as the definitive guide to the PlayStation – and they're not far wrong either. It's stuffed full of reviews and cheats for a hulking selection of top games, plus a short section of previews thrown in for good measure. Because of its size, some of the games featured aren't exactly up to date, but the level of detail in the walk-throughs and hints makes them well worth a read anyway. Several times while pouring over the pages I had to wonder which poor PR man or games tester had been tortured, bribed or blackmailed to get the information and codes. But when I thought about it again I realised I didn't really care as long as I was being treated to them! This publication is definitely for the serious gamer only. It's written and laid out in a no-nonsense 'cram the pages full of info' style with a good selection of pictures to illustrate the point. A light-hearted fun read it isn't, but if you want detail – and plenty of it – this is a tenner well spent. (KR)

INDEPENDENCE DAY by Devlin/Emmerich & Molstad

PRICE: £4.99
RELEASED BY: Boxtree
RATING: ★★

Film novelisations are curious beasts. They're either enriched and expanded, providing previously unknown character or situation development, or they're cheap, knocked off in ten minutes are replacing stage directions with "He said" and "She said". As the film of the year (or so the pub-

licists would have you believe), one might have expected this to get a Craig Shaw Gardner touch (ie the *Batman* novelisations) or even a good old Alan Dean Foster (the *Alien* series, *Star Wars* et al). Instead it gets the *StarGate* treatment, a quick spin-off credited to the guys who did the movie script plus one Stephen Molstad whom, one suspects, probably did most of the writing. It's not a bad book – portions of it are pleasantly expanded, most concerning Jas and her attempts to track down missing boyfriend Steve. Her travels to the El Toro base, and the people she picks up along the way are interesting – mostly die to the inclusion of sequences cut from the final print, including the placard-waving 'Repent ye Sinners' man.

Considering this is probably the best action movie of the summer, I was more than a little disappointed that the book didn't get braver. Where was the background to the aliens? Where was the background to characters such as Nimziki and Okun? And although the nice epilogue suggests that whilst not everything was okay, mankind would at least work together, where was the people-view point of this? This isn't a bad book by any means but considering the movie it supports, it ought to have been bigger and better. (GR)

THE MAKING OF INDEPENDENCE DAY by Rachel Aberly & Volker Engel

PRICE: £8.99
RELEASED BY: Titan
RATING: ★★

Many "Making of..." books consist of glorious colour publicity stills, a handful of syndicated quotes and a lot of positive gushing to bolster lacklustre text. By employing Rachel Aberly, the publishers

have ensured a good, solid book to support the movie. Aberly's teaming with visual effects maestro Engel helps no end as the behind-the-scenes shots, concept drawings and candid comments by cast and crew make this a very special book. Split into logical chapters, even the brief segment dedicated to disaster movie supremo Irwin Allen fits in well. But it is the pictures that really sell the book to me, so many good ones we haven't seen before in the countless magazine and newspaper articles. If the book falls down slightly, it lacks any post-production detail. Marketing strategies, reaction, that sort of thing. The final page lists (and apologises for) a woefully incomplete cast list alongside the three teaser posters, all of which deserved better prominence in the book.

That quibble aside, this is one of the better Making of's to hit the shelves, a satisfactory tie-in with blockbuster-of-the-week, and well worth your nine quid. (GR)

ANIME MOVIE GUIDE/A BEGINNERS GUIDE

PRICE: £9.99/£6.99
RELEASED BY: Titan
RATING: ★★★★★/★★

The incredible success of Anime on these shores has been meteoric, and Titan are on hand

with two guides to the history of the Japanese cartoons: the former an in-depth reference piece, while the latter is a thin basic guide to popular Anime, and more lightweight than Karen Carpenter. Helen McCarthy's *Anime Movie Guide* is a superb book, and offers insights in the progression of Anime since 1983, plot summaries, production details and both the Japanese and English names. A year-by-year account of the releases is used to detail the films, and Helen has also added boxes of stories to avoid with the UK release of *Professional Golgo* getting the kicking it so rightfully deserves, while other boxes discuss related novels and specific genres. The whole book is then

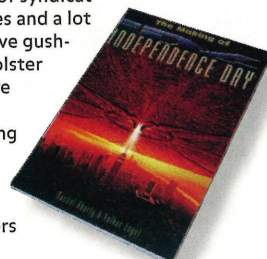
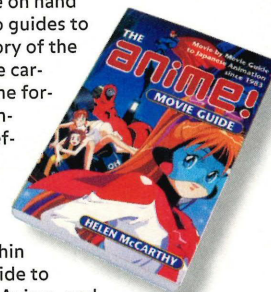
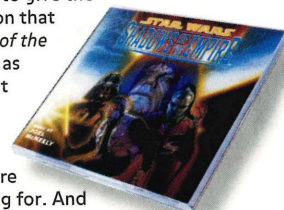
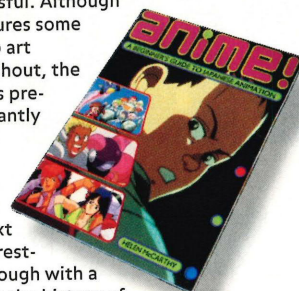
wrapped up with a superb index detailing a complete list of every Anime title of the last thirteen years. Sadly, Helen's *Beginner's Guide* is less successful. Although it features some superb art throughout, the book is predominantly monochrome, and the text is interesting enough with a look at the history of the series and quick glances at spin-off merchandise. *Beginner's Guide* is a strange book, and Helen's text is far more detailed and adult than the clunky design suggests – you should not be able to judge a book by its cover, and so potential buyer's are urged not to be put off by the atrocious design which frankly does an otherwise informative read a massive injustice. (SM)

CDs STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

PRICE: £13.99
RELEASED BY: Varese
Sarabande
RATING: ★★★★★

At first glance, this appears to be just a music soundtrack CD from the new *Star Wars* game due to appear on the Nintendo 64 sometime next year. Alongside Steve Perry's novel and the John Wagner comic adaptation, it could just be a piece of cash-in merchandise to give the

impression that *Shadows of the Empire* is as important as the new trilogy of films we're all waiting for. And with a track listing including such titles as *The Seduction of Princess Leia* and *The Destruction of Xizor's Palace*, you might be forgiven for thinking this rather gives the plot away. The music is, of course, excellent – Joel McNeely is a worthy successor to John Williams, no doubt aided by the splendour that is the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (side point: how can something be Scottish and National?), and there are even traces of Williams' famous title score woven into the new music. All this on its own would be enough to tempt even the casual *Star Wars* fan – this CD, however, is far from just a soundtrack. It's a fully functional enhanced CD – the current US jargon for a music CD with CD-ROM capabilities, replacing the old 5" video CDs of a few years ago. (hey, even the Pet Shop Boys have an enhanced music CD out now!). This one features everything you need to know for a full introduction to *Shadows of the Empire*. Detailed notes on the books, the audio book, the toys, the comics, the game and the story of *Shadows of the Empire* itself. Biographies of George Lucas, plus the guys behind the new game and even a mini encyclopedia of the characters in the story... everything you need to know about *Shadows of the Empire* is here,



excellently illustrated and easy to use. Hopefully, this will be the future of soundtrack CDs – imagine someone reissuing the *Aliens* CDs, enhanced, or the James Bonds ones. The possibilities are endless... (GR)

VIDEOS

BATMAN AND ROBIN – JOKER'S REVENGE AND THE PENGUIN

PRICE: £6.99 each
RELEASED BY: Warner Home Video
RATING: ★★★★★ each

To describe the sporadic release schedule of these videos are severely aggravating is something of an understatement. Currently showing on Saturday mornings, *Batman Adventures/The Adventures of Batman and Robin* is probably the best superhero-based cartoon series in the history of the genre, with its startlingly stylistic pictures, sets and music (and indeed thematic mood direction) based on the Tim Burton movies and the stories and costumes from the original, superior, comics. Mixing the Thirties look with Nineties sophistication, the show is unbeatable and Warners are gradually releasing a handful of tapes with two episodes a throw.

The latest batch are, titularly, about two of Bats' oldest nemeses, although *Harlequinade* is more about the Joker's wonderfully manic (and psychotic) assistant Harley Quinn. The quality of writing and art make these way above the norm for superhero cartoons, and are clearly aimed at viewers older than, say, the new versions of *Spider-Man* or *Fantastic Four*, which makes their Saturday morning time slot somewhat incongruous. How many PG rated cartoons do you normally see at 10am these days?

With the same production company about to unleash a similarly stylised version of Superman, one hopes that will get a more suitable showing time. And the next batch of Batman tapes? Well, when *Batman Forever* hit the theatres, we saw a Riddler and a Two-Face collection, so my money is firmly on a couple of Mister Freeze and Poison Ivy collections before too long. (GR)

INVASION OF THE BODYSNATCHERS

PRICE: £11.99
RELEASED BY: Titan
RATING: ★★★★★

There is an unwritten law in Hollywood, second only to the law of

sequels and diminishing returns: Thou Shalt Not Make A Good Remake Of A Classic Movie. Trying to better Don Siegal's claustrophobic black-and-white Fifties chiller must have seemed an impossible task to director Philip Kauffman back in 1978, yet he pulls it off with huge aplomb. This is no doubt helped by the deliberately larger scale setting, an excellent cast and one of the best closing shots of a film ever. Whereas the original just focused on the traditional small mid-west town, the remake goes one bigger and features San Francisco. Nice touches abound (Kevin McCarthy, star of the original, features briefly, screaming the same lines as he did at the end of the original, and a dog wakes up to find it has the head of a man) and even original director Siegal pops up. Leonard Nimoy, Brooke Adams and Donald Sutherland may be the stars but it is actually the (then) newcomers Veronica Cartwright and Jeff Goldblum who steal the movie, alongside the beautiful camera work (a superb opening shot underlines the beauty of the flowers as well as underlining the danger they prelude). All in all, this is a fabulous film, finally available in wide screen, and it's easy to see why no one berates this remake. Perhaps proving that you can't hold a good story down, another remake, just called *Bodysnatchers*, turned up on the straight-to-video circuit a couple of years ago and even that was good. (GR)

BABYLON 5 – THE LONG DARK and SPIDER IN THE WEB

PRICE: £12.99
RELEASED BY: Beyond Vision
RATING: ★★★

Rarely has a series consistently improved with each successive series as *Babylon 5* has. Starting out as a good but rather typical opponent of *Star Trek's* *Deep Space Nine* show, the sub-plots and characters made it compelling watching by the end of its first run. Now racing towards a fourth season (which in a bizarre twist of, well, bizarreness, we get to see in the UK before the US), these two episodes are from the first quarter of Season Two. In *The Long Dark*, a series of bizarre murders lead security guy Garibaldi (silly name, great character) to track a lone woman, whose husband has died in mysterious circumstances. However, her claims that there is an invisible monster on the loose may have some basis in reality. *Spider in the Web* has less to do with *Babylon 5's* overall

umbrella themes, concentrating on Talia's attempts to stay out of a cyborg assassin's gun sights, while the Free Mars movement grows in strength. Watch out for the first appearance of Zak Allen – little more than an extra here, but by Season Three... (GR)

BABYLON 5 – A RACE THROUGH DARK PLACES and SOUL MATES

PRICE: £12.99
RELEASED BY: Beyond Vision
RATING: ★★★

Walter Koenig may be better known around the world as Chekov from *Star Trek*, but it always looks as if he far prefers playing the semi-regular Bester in *Babylon 5*. Here he is, known for being a cute, occasionally nauseating Russian ensign but thanks to *A Race Through Dark Places*, he gets his teeth into quite a meaty chunk of nastiness as the less-than-moral Psi Corps troubleshooter. He's back on the station tracking rogue telepaths, but is there another reason for his presence? Is Bester trying to trap *Babylon 5's* resident telepath Talia Winters? Or is she just getting paranoid? Talia's powers are also prevalent in *Soul Mates*, a story paralleling Talia's meeting with an old 'friend' with Ambassador Londo's decision about his wife – and more importantly, which of the three he will keep and which he will divorce. All great stuff, but Koenig really shows how restrictive his *Star Trek* role was for twenty years as he makes a superb piece of nastiness ooze with fascination. (GR)

THE OUTER LIMITS – THE NEW SERIES Vol 4

PRICE: £10.99
RELEASED BY: Warner Home Video
RATING: ★★

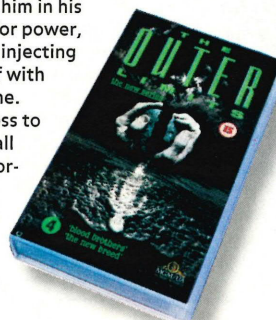
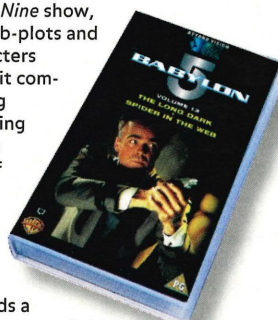
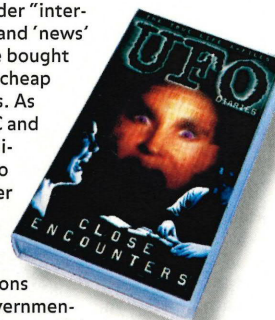
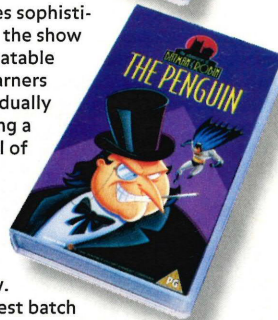
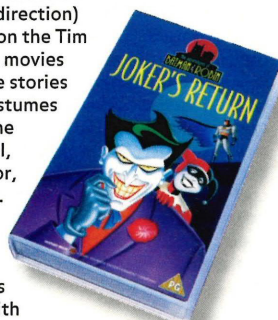
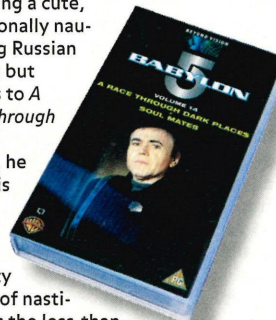
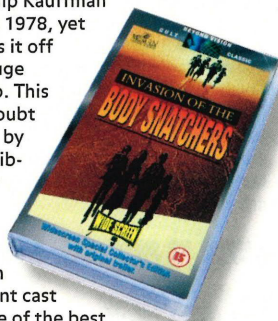
Both episodes in this fourth tape deal with scientists prolonging life and the consequences of such actions. *Blood Brothers* stars pop star turned Reggie Kray, Martin Kemp as a ruthless businessman who – when his brother (Thomas Cavanagh) appears to discover the key to eternal life and an end to illness – plots to hold the world to ransom until a highest-bidder is found. After a promising start and the expected 'money versus morals' arguments, Kemp's character predictably starts offing anyone who stands before him in his quest for power, before injecting himself with the gene. Needless to say, it all goes horribly wrong, and the gene is

revealed to be flawed, with Kemp soon succumbing to its frailties. The second story, *The New Breed*, follows the same pattern, with the scientist role filled by Richard Thomas (John-Boy in *The Waltons*), whose new brother-in-law has been diagnosed with a fatal cancer. Coincidentally, the scientist is a master of robotics and has created minuscule Nano-Bots which are injected into the bloodstream and repair any ailments. As in *Blood Brothers*, the Nano-Bots are injected without being tested and following a period of recovery and good health, the Nano-Bots start enhancing the subject's body – with gills, a second pair of eyes, and poison sacs to repel attack! Of the *New Outer Limits* tapes, the similarity between two predictable stories does this tape no favours, and is the weakest of the series so far. (SM)

UFO DIARIES: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

PRICE: £10.99
RELEASED BY: NTV
RATING: ★

Once upon a time, whenever a new phenomena hit popular culture, there would be a slew of cheap 'n' nasty cash-in books, with only the most tenuous of links to the original cause celebre. Such is the case today, as the world goes *X-Files* crazy – but in this modern age, the printed word is passe. Enter: the cheap sell-thru video, looking as if it's been put together in somebody's garden shed, made up of low-fi camcorder 'interviews' and 'news' footage bought in from cheap libraries. As the BBC and Sky audiences go wild over possible alien abductions and Governmental cover-ups of the sort which make Watergate look like a public information service, so the rip-off merchants move in and fill up the video shelves. I'm always wary of videos carrying the E certificate (ie exempt from BBFC classification) as it usually just means the BBFC haven't got round to introducing a C (for crap) rating. This particular eighty minutes is hosted by a wanna-be anchor man who tries to assert his knowledge of the subject by wearing an Arran jumper and moving back and forth through various trite, and tacky, UFO memorabilia, trying to impress us with his knowledge of the subject at hand. Sadly (or maybe it's a blessing, there's no actual footage and only a few very poor, photographs to support any of the stories. The video tries to deal with topics like Gulf Breeze and Roswell, even managing to get an interview with leading abduction expert Bud Hopkins, but then fails to produce a single validating image, whereas anyone who has even a passing knowledge of the subject will have seen dozens. No, instead the producers have opted for dressing midgets or children up in silly alien outfits supported only by B (or even C) movie thespians and some very poor back-lighting. If this was a piss-take, it



couldn't have been done better. As it is, if you're a skeptic, you'll be more skeptical and if you're a believer, you'll be embarrassed. This is definitely a close encounter of the deferred kind! (GR)

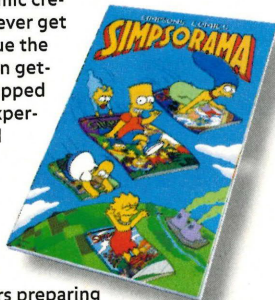
GRAPHIC NOVELS

SIMPSONS COMICS

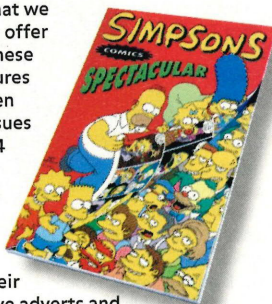
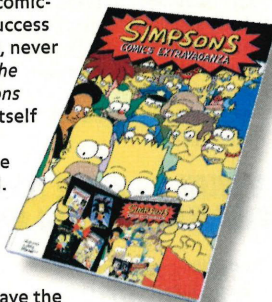
SIMPS-O-RAMA

PRICE: £6.99
RELEASED BY: Titan
RATING: ★★★★★

The latest in Titan's collection of comic strips (taken from the original US bimonthlies printed by Bongo) sees Homer taking over the Duff beer brewery, Bart and Milhouse learning that comic creators never get their due the Simpson getting trapped in an experimental biosphere and a clone of Ned Flanders preparing the way for an alien invasion. Never let it be said that the comics cannot imitate their show which spawned them. Clever, witty, wry and biting they may be but unlike so



many humorous television cartoons-come-comic-strip success stories, never does *The Simpsons* allow itself to become cynical. Hell, the creators even have the good grace to put themselves in the firing line of the jokes first (vis a vis *Give Me Merchandising* or *Give Me Death!*). As yet we've not seen collected editions of either Bartman, Itchy and Scratchy or, best of all, the Radioactive Man stories (the latter being the best pastiche on the history of American four-color comics ever). But not to worry, we can be satisfied with what we have on offer here. These adventures are taken from issues 11 to 14 of the original series, complete with their inventive adverts and



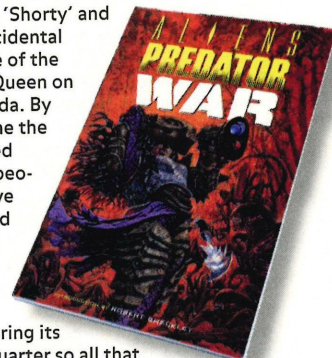
back-up strips, most of which pay homage to those creepy old EC Comics horror tales of the Fifties. Also, if the brilliance of this collection isn't enough, Titan still have available two earlier collections, the first offering up Issues 1 to 4 under the banner *Simpsons Comic Extravaganza*, then Issues 6 to 9 turn up in *Simpsons Comic Spectacular*. Hmm, when *Simpsons Comics Strike Back* comes out at Christmas, I wonder what issues will feature in that, bearing in mind that multiples of five seem unpopular popular in the world of Simpsons graphic novels... (GR)

ALIENS VS PREDATOR: WAR

PRICE: £12.95
RELEASED BY: Titan
RATING: ★★★

Alien vs Predator: War catches up with established *Aliens vs Predator* heroine, Machiko, who is now an honorary member of a travelling Predator clan. Things aren't going to well for the would-be huntress, however, and resentment is rife within the feudal Predator ship, and things come to a head as the Predators prepare for their biggest hunt yet, having infected the planet Bunda with Alien eggs from their captured Queen. The rich populace of Bunda, though, want no part in the hunt, and as the Queen claims the planet for her own through the impregnation of the wealthy

inhabitants, and the Predators fight amongst themselves, Machiko finds herself siding with a group of humans who have already escaped an alien planet only to find themselves in the midst of more. The promising premise of *War* is soon lost as too many characters are introduced, and it soon becomes obvious that the novelty of Alien and Predator battles was a one-shot novelty which is starting to wear thin. The majority of the book is dedicated to Machiko's running battle with a Predator nicknamed 'Shorty' and the accidental release of the Alien Queen on to Bunda. By the time the escaped Earth people have entered the fray, the book is entering its final quarter so all that remains is to quickly mop up the bad guys and restore Machiko's honour and freedom. Ho hum. There's no doubting that there is plenty of mileage in Titan's continuing *Alien* and *Predator* graphic novels, but the confrontations between them should now come to a end — after all, we only need to see the hybrid result of an impregnated Predator once. (SM)



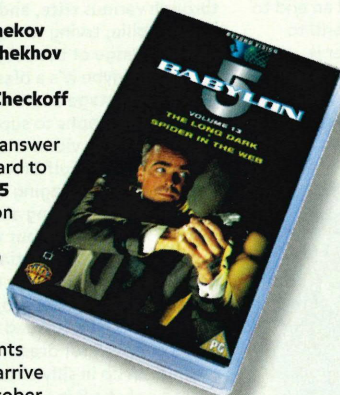
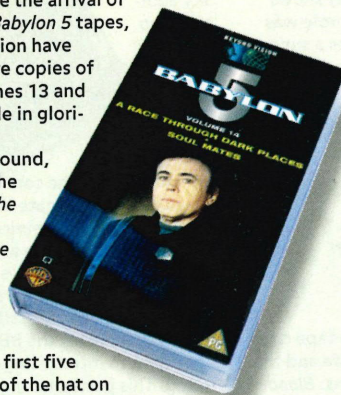
WIN WIN WIN

BABYLON 5

To celebrate the arrival of the latest *Babylon 5* tapes, Beyond Vision have given us five copies of both Volumes 13 and 14, available in glorious Dolby Surround Sound, featuring the episodes *The Long Dark*, *Spider in the Web*, *Race Through Dark Places* and *Soul Mates*. The first five names out of the hat on October 7th will win the tapes. Simple, eh? All you need to tell us on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope is who Walter Koenig plays in *Star Trek*. Is it:

- A) Pavel Chekov
- B) Anton Chekhov
- or
- C) Sergei Checkoff

Send your answer on a postcard to **BABYLON 5** competition at the *PlayStation Plus* editorial address (see contents page), to arrive before October 7th 1996.

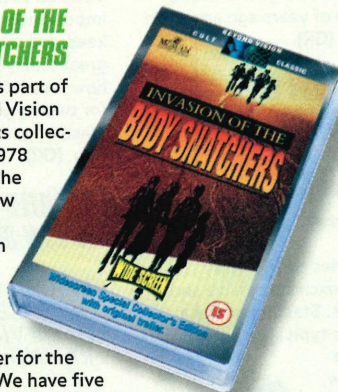


INVASION OF THE BODYSNATCHERS

Available as part of the Beyond Vision Cult Classics collection, this 1978 version of the movie is now available in wide screen and also features the original promotional trailer for the first time. We have five copies to give away and all you have to tell us is which fantasy film Veronica Cartwright featured in. Was it:

- A) *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*
- B) *Alien*
- or
- C) *The Terminator*

Send your postcard to **BODYSNATCHERS** Competition at the *PlayStation Plus* editorial address, to arrive before October 7th 1996.



THE OUTER LIMITS — THE NEW SERIES

Volume 4 of this new series has been issued by Beyond Vision, and contains two previously unavailable episodes, *Blood Brothers* and *The New Breed*. To win one of five copies, just tell us which Eighties pop group Martin Kemp was a member of. Was it:

- A) Spandau Ballet
- B) ABC
- or
- C) Ultravox

Send your postcard to **OUTER LIMITS 4** competition at the *PlayStation Plus* editorial address, to arrive before October 7th 1996.

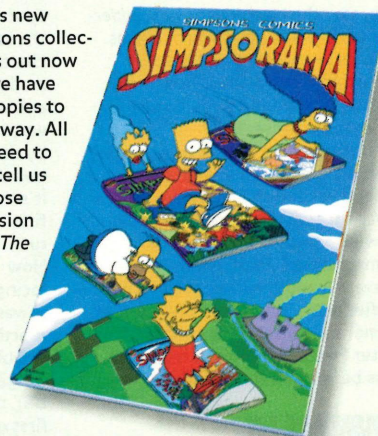
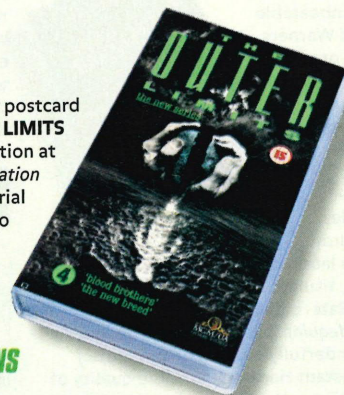
SIMPSONS COMICS

SIMPS-O-RAMA

Titan's new Simpsons collection is out now and we have five copies to give away. All you need to do is tell us whose television show *The Simpsons* was first seen. Was it:

- A) Roseanne Barr's show
- B) Cybill Shepherd's show
- or
- C) Tracey Ullman's show

Send your postcard to **SIMPSON GRAPHIC NOVEL** competition at the *PlayStation Plus* editorial address, to arrive before October 7th 1996.





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Resident Evil

Resident Evil is one of the hottest games to hit the PlayStation to date, and will finally be on sale as you read this. This walk-through will help guide you around the deadly mansion when playing as Chris, although many of the hints are also applicable to Jill. There's also a rundown on how to make the biggest mess out of the bad guys and the relevant map-related numbers alongside the room descriptions will help you find them on the map. So, lace up your Doc Marten's and take a deep breath — Resident Evil awaits.

THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE MANSION
— DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE QUIET OPENING SCENE, TERRIBLE DANGER LURKS AHEAD.

STEP THIS WAY

If you're too busy hiding behind the sofa to play the game, here's a walk-through guide to the mysteries within the mansion.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Go into Room 3, turn left into the hallway to see the zombie.

Run back out to 1 and pick up Jill's Berreta.

Return to 3 and shoot the first zombie. Grab the clips from the dead body he was munching upon.

Go back to 1.

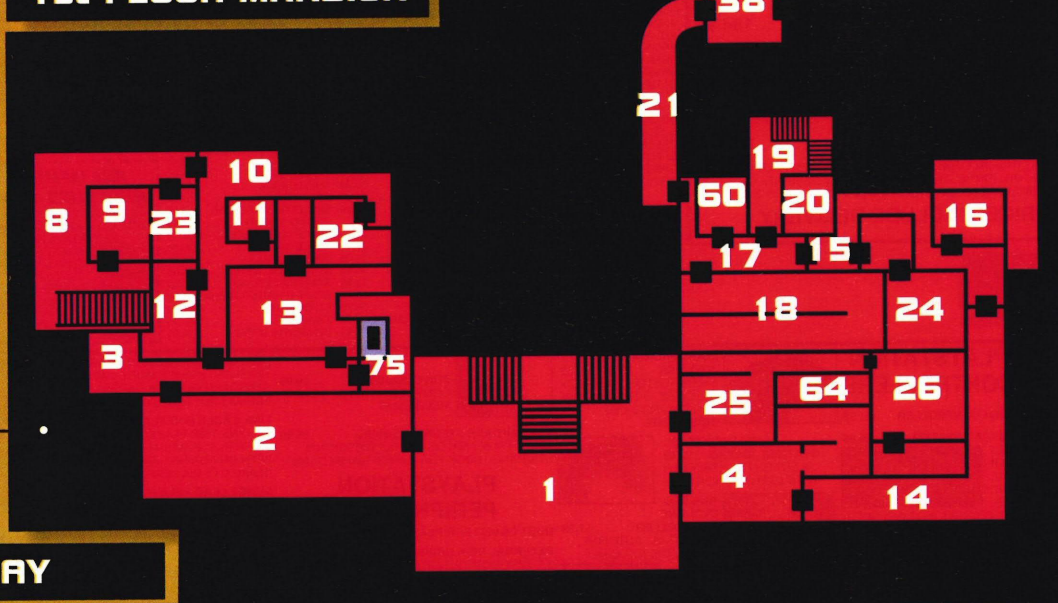
Go to Room 4 and move the stairs by the statue so you can get the 1st floor map.

THE TERRACE

Return to 1. Go upstairs and turn right at the first tier. Now go into Room 5 and get the **small key**. Walk through to find the decaying forest on the terrace, and take the clip. Quickly leave to avoid being attacked by the crows.

Go back out to Room 6, kill the two zombies and push the statue over the edge.

1st FLOOR MANSION



2nd FLOOR MANSION



Get the blue jewel from the statue rubble in Room 2.

Head back up to Room 7.

After taking out these three zombies walk down the stairs to Room 8.

Zombies are easily avoided by running quickly past them, so conserve your ammo, go to Room 9 behind the stairs and meet Rebecca.

Get the **mansion key** from the bed, store the **small key** and take the clips from the box.

DECISIONS

At this point the game can turn one of two ways: Say yes to Rebecca coming with you and at certain points of play she can be selected. Say no, and you'll end up saving her later in the game. The choice is yours! Continue to the end of the hall and through to Room 10.

Turn left and run to the end of the hall. Make sure you have at least thirty rounds of ammo and blast away at the horde.



AS CHRIS, YOU MUST CONSERVE AMMO BY KNIFING ENEMIES.

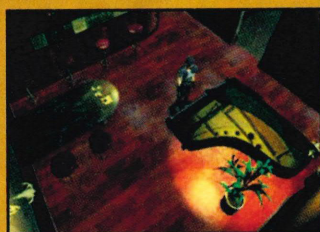


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It reads "Some tigers have a red eye and a blue eye"



Next go to Room 11 and put the **blue jewel** into the **tiger's eye** to get the **wind crest**.

Go across to 12 to get a **clip**, examine the desk and kill the zombie. Get the **Keeper's diary** and **shells**.

MAKING MUSIC

Save the game with the **ink ribbon** in Room 1 and take it back to Room 9 to put away.

Go through the door at the end of the hall and proceed to Room 13 – the piano room.

Move around the piano and push the case away from the bookshelf. Take the **music notes** and use them at the piano. Rebecca then shows up to practice. Head to Room 2.

Take the **emblem** from above fireplace in the dining room and return to Room 13 where a secret door should have opened. You should keep at least one inventory slot.

Go into the secret room and take the **gold emblem**. Replace it with the **emblem**.

Go back to 2 and place the **gold emblem** above fireplace.



Go and take the **shield key** from behind the clock.

WHAT A DOG!

Head back to Room 1 and onto 4. Go to Room 14 and unlock the door. The **mansion key** should now be discarded.

Walk along the corridor until the first dog jumps through the window. Shoot it once, walk closer and keep shooting it. Now walk forward and do the same to the other dog.

Kill them, move the chest in the hallway and get the **clip**.

Room 15 after the dogs is a winding hall which has a **green herb** in the corner. Proceed down the hallway and go into Room 16.

BLOOD BATH

Drain the bath tub and you will be able to take the **small key** and leave.

Move to the end of 15, go into 17 and get ready for two weak zombies.

Enter Room 18 – this is the crow gallery.

Inspect the pictures and hit the switches under them in ascending order of age – new-born, infant, lively boy, young man, tired middle-aged man, bald old man and then the end picture. Take the **star crest** and leave.

Go into Room 19 and get ready for a zombie. Take a **green herb** and go into Room 20 – a storeroom. Get the other **crest** and then Save.

Head out to 17. The room marked 21 leads to an outside passage – get ready for a dog.

Once this is done, insert both the **wind** and **star crests** at the end of the passage.

THE GREEN HOUSE

You now should get the **chemicals** from Room 20 and proceed back to Room 10. At the very end of the L-shaped hallway is the greenhouse – 22.

Use the **chemicals** in the pump to kill off the plant. Go to the area behind the plant to get the **armour key**. Use a **herb** if needed. Remember this room if energy supplies run low.

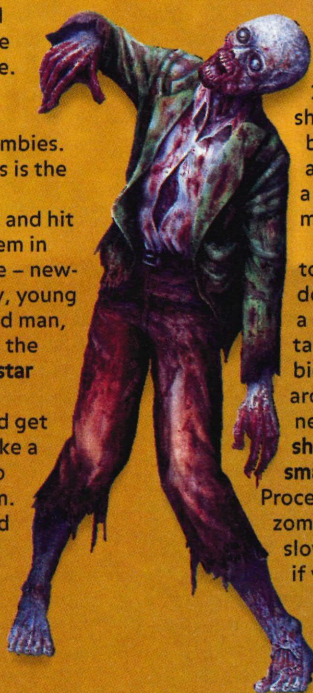
Leave the greenhouse and go through to 23.

Take the **broken shotgun**, **clip** and use the **small key** to unlock the desk to get the **shells**. An inventory adjustment in Room 20 may be needed.

Enter the room marked 24, replace the shotgun with the broken shotgun and you're now a killing machine!

Proceed back to 1 and enter door 25. There's a **clip** on the table and a zombie inside just around the corner. Get the **shells** using the **small key**.

Proceed to 26. The zombie inside is slow so avoid him if you can and take the **ink ribbon** and **herb** if they are required.



INHABITANTS

Killing the creatures littered throughout the mansion requires more than just a happy trigger finger. Here's a brief guide of how best to dispatch them...

WHITE ZOMBIE

These enemies crop up throughout the mansion. They usually take around six Beretta shots to dispatch, however some may take another shot. A shotgun, however will sort them out a lot quicker. The trick is to shoot them in the back when they're on the floor.

DARK ZOMBIE

These are exterminated in the same way as the white zombies, using the shotgun. The trick is to let them get close – aim high at their heads and decapitate them in a single shot. Alternatively, dishing out a good knee-capping will reap the same reward.

ZOMBIES



FLOORED ZOMBIES

These zombies crawl along the floor. The quickest way to kill them is to let them start eating your feet and then stamp on their heads – killing them instantly. You can shoot them in the back, but this wastes valuable ammo.

CERBEROS

The best way to dispatch of these deadly guard dogs is to get your shot in nice and early. If you let them get too close it becomes impossible to get an accurate hit. Once you do, though, keep pumping them full of lead as they lie on the floor. It will take about six to eight hits to finish them off

CERBEROS



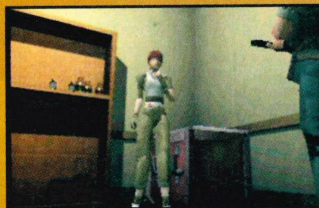
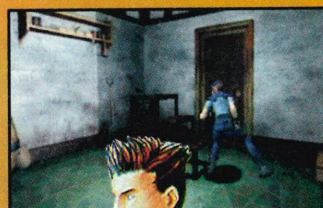
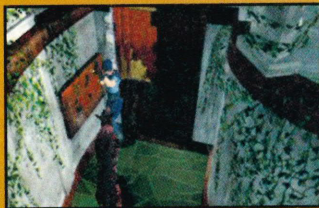
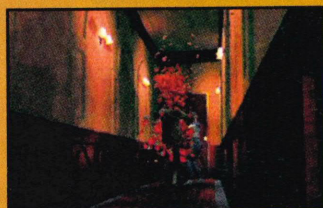
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BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO



TIPS



WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY...

Make your way upstairs and go to Room 27. Get ready for two zombies in the U-shaped hall.

Go into 28 and carefully move the statues over the circle grates on the floor.

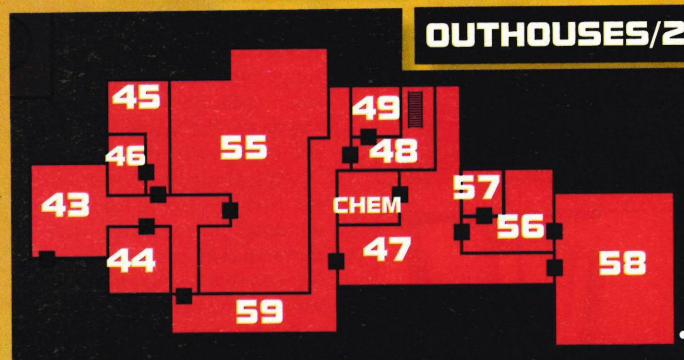
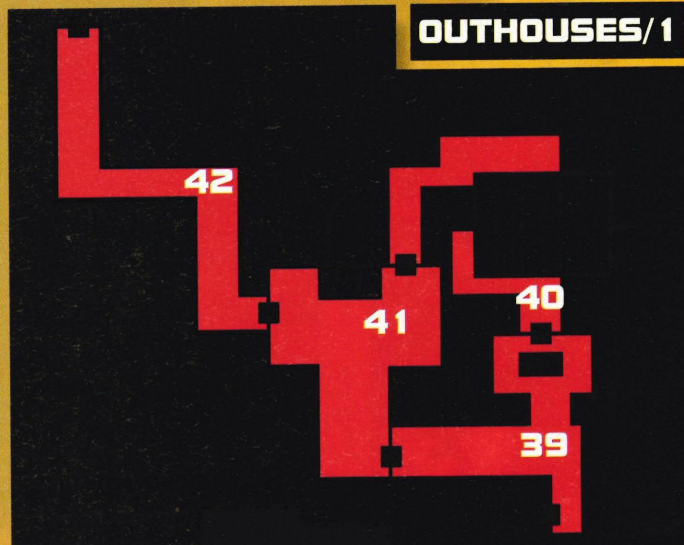
Hit the switch to open the showcase. Take out the **sun crest**.

Go to the end of 27 and into Room 29 to get the **botany book**. Now go to 30, killing the three zombies.

Go through door 30 and have a shotgun ready for a zombie!

Go to 31 and examine the insect display then hit the switch to drain the aquarium. Now push the aquarium to the right and then move the cabinet towards it.

Get the shells



WATCH OUT FOR THE NASTY SPIDERS THAT APPEAR IN ROOM 55!

and take the researcher's will on the desk.

Go to Room 32 and take the **lighter** found here. Take the **shells** and the **red herb**. Leave.

Move to the end of the hall and into Room 33. Use the **lighter** on the fireplace to reveal a **2nd floor map**. Leave and go downstairs 34 and back to 20.

GET A LIFE!

Load up on shells and make sure your life is replenished.

Make your way back upstairs to 27 and into 35 – make sure you have the **lighter**.

Move down the corridor, examine Richard and get a **clip**. Now go through the next door and get ready for a zombie!

Unlock the door to 37. The **shield key** should now be discarded. *Do not enter this room.* Instead go back downstairs and along to Room 36.

In this room use the **lighter** on the **candles** to reveal secret room behind the case. Now move the case and get the

shells from inside the small room. A **clip** is also found in the main room.

Now proceed back to 37 and enter. By exploring inside it you will encounter a snake. Blast away and it retreats. Examine the hole where it came from to get the final **moon crest**. **Shells** are also in the attic.

REBECCA GETS IN ON THE ACTION

Now it's time to get poisoned!

If you said yes to Rebecca following you then you'll take control of her now and will have to return to the storeroom to get the serum to cure Chris. However, if you said no she'll appear anyway and you'll wake up in Room 9.

Get the **crests**, move to 21 and place them in the remaining holes. You should store everything except guns and ammo now.

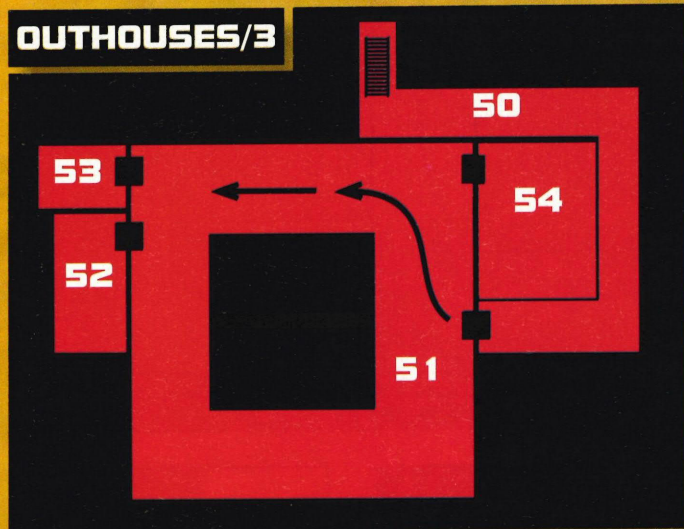
Go through the now open door to Room 38 and push the stairs up to the shelf. Climb up and get a **square crank**. There's a



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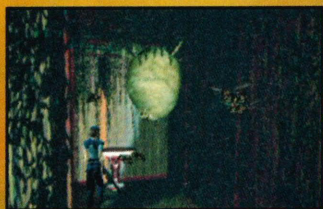
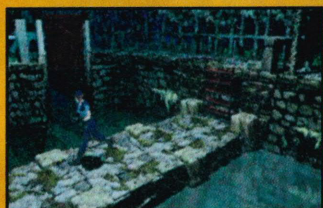
OUTHOUSES/3



small key on one of the barrels.

Move through to Room 39 and be ready for three dogs! Take the **garden map** on the wall next to the useless elevator. Go to 40.

Move around the pool and use the **crank** on the **square hole**. The water begins to drain away and this reveals a passage. Get across to this passage and run like crazy for the elevator or the snakes will catch up with you and so poison you.



DON'T BOTHER TRYING TO BAG THE SHARKS WHILE THEY'RE SWIMMING AROUND - EMPTY THE WATER FROM THE UNDERGROUND LABS FIRST.

IN THE DOG HOUSE AGAIN

Head down the elevator to 41 and prepare for more dogs. Move through the gates into 42 looking out for three more dogs. Proceed to the guard house - 43.

Push the statue down the hall to cover the hole over. Room 44 is a Save room. Go in and store the **square crank**.

Go into 45 and destroy the two zombies. Go to 46, drain the tub and take the **control room key**. Explore the bedroom to get the **red book**, **small key** and **shells**.

Store the **red book** and go to the door where you moved the statue. Move down the hallway and enter 47.

Move down the passage to the left by the wasps' nest and grab **dormitory key 002**. Quickly run and leave the room and continue down the hall to Room 002 - 48 on the map. Use the **key** and discard it. There are some **herbs** hidden behind the statue - stock up if you need to.

Inside 49 will be a zombie and a **clip**. Head back into 48 and get the **dorm map** and the **plant 42 report**.

Push the cabinets to reveal a ladder. Go down it to Room 50.

FISH AND CLIPS

Push the three boxes into the water to create a walkway. The first box will have to be pushed backwards to get it away from the wall. Go through the double-doors to Room 51.

Run like crazy and look out for the big fish! Go in the direc-

WHEN KILLED, THE GIANT SPIDERS SPILL OPEN THEIR GUTS, UNLEASHING LOADS OF TINY KILLER BUGS.



tion of our map arrows to the other side of the room and into Room 52. Discard the **control room key**. Flip the lever to drain the rooms. Hit the button next to the door to open a weapon storeroom in the adjoining Room 53 and go in.

Take the **dormitory key 003**, **two clips** and **shells**, but be sure to save one slot for a **small key** that's found in Room 54 directly across from you. Get the **small key**.

Load up with all you can carry and head back up the ladder.

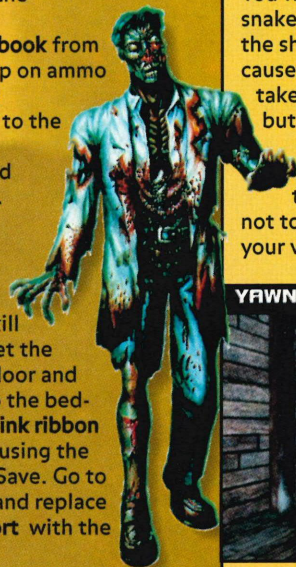
ARACHNOPHOBIC

Move back to 48 and enter Room 55. Make sure you have plenty of shotgun shells to take on the two giant spiders. You will most likely be poisoned so there is a **blue herb** back in Room 43 to counter this. Get the **ribbon** and the **clip**, and take a look at the pool table.

Get the **red book** from 44 and stock up on ammo for a big fight! Navigate back to the room with the wasps' hive and enter room 56.

Discard the **key**.

Enter the adjoining Room 57 and kill the zombie. Get the **clip** from the floor and head back into the bedroom. Get the **ink ribbon** from the desk using the **small key** and Save. Go to the bookcase and replace the **V-jolt report** with the **red book**.



with the Beretta, two or three with the shotgun. The shotgun, and anything as powerful, can inflict multiple hits if there are dogs close to each other, and it is just possible to wing three dogs with one shot.

CROWS

Take one or two hits with any weapon and the easiest items to use against them are your combat knife and the Beretta. Wait until they get close and slash them with your knife or let rip with the pistol.

CROWS



GIANT SPIDER

Large amounts of lead pumped into the head is the only real way to be rid of these over-sized arachnids. Try not to let them get close (a task in itself), and hit them at long-range with the shotgun about ten times. When the body explodes get your Doc Marten's to work on the scuttling babies that it quickly spawns.

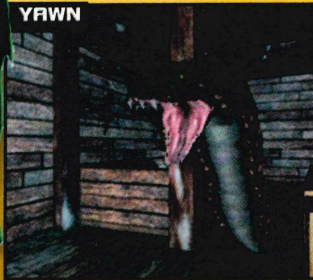
GIANT SPIDERS



YAWN

You won't face these giant snakes until you've picked up the shotgun. Their attacks cause immense damage. They take about eight hits to fell, but because they are constantly weaving and ducking, you will have to be a pretty good shot not to waste a few rounds of your valuable ammo.

YAWN



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TIPS



KILLER COCKTAIL

The other cabinet will move to reveal a door. Go into Room 58 and be prepared to meet Plant 42! Again, if you said yes to Rebecca she'll now become controllable. Go into the room marked **CHEM** on the map and mix the V-Jolt fluid. Here's the recipe: $1+2=3$, $3+4=7$, $2+4=6$, $6+7=13$, $1+2=3$, $3+13=V$ -Jolt. Take the mixture back to Room 54 and use it on the roots. The plant will now die and Chris'll finish him off.

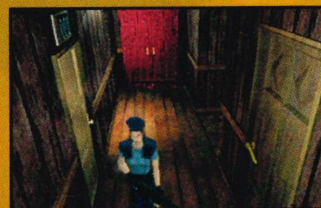
NOTE: If you said no, here's how to kill it with Chris. Always keep to the side and keep moving to avoid the falling acid. A trail of small white blobs will show you where the bigger patch will drop. It's only the bigger pools of acid that can harm you. You'll probably only get one or two shots off before you'll have to move again. The plant will retract once and come back alive. So don't be fooled into thinking it's dead. It'll finally die when all its arms have fallen off.

Now get hold of the **key** from the fireplace.

Move out to 59 and you'll encounter Wesker. Load up on any stored ammo and head back to the mansion.

After Wesker finishes speaking go back to the mansion via 21 and you'll be introduced to the hunters in Room 17. Get rid of the first one and enter Room 60 using the **helmet key**.

Go to the desk and turn on the light. Get the **Magnum rounds** from the desk but leave the **doom book** for later if you don't have the space.



HUNTING SEASON

Go into Room 19 but keep an eye out for the hunter. Read the note behind the stairwell and enter Room 20. Store the **Magnum rounds**.

Proceed back to Room 17 and go through to 15. At the end of the hallway you'll encounter another hunter. Take care of him and continue to the end of the hallway and through to Room 14.

The next hallway is the lair of two spiders which can be avoided by running straight through. Make your way to Room 1 and go upstairs.

Equip the Beretta and enter Room 6. A hunter will need killing. If you follow him round, shooting as you go, eight hits later he'll be toast and you'll be unscathed. Now run in the direction the hunter came from and you should avoid the other one coming round the opposite side. Go into Room 7.

There's a hunter right by the door. If you have enough energy take him out, if not, run around the corner and try to make it to Room 61 before the second hunter gets a hit. Pick up the **orders** and the **shells** from the table, but leave the **Magnum rounds** if you don't have room. Hit the switch next to the door and look at the head above the fireplace. Push the stair in front and climb to get the **red jewel**. Leave.



RUN AWAY

If you didn't kill the hunter outside Room 7, you'll need to get out fast so as not to sustain any hits. As you go through the door hold the following buttons down: Up-Right and Run. You'll run out of the room and curve round to stand exactly at the top of the stairs. As soon as you are close enough, hit the Action Button and you'll go down the stairs without taking any hits.

Room 8 sees Rebecca being attacked by a hunter – but if you said yes to her following you she won't be there. Taking the hunter out isn't too difficult as you should have a fresh supply of shotgun shots. Once it's dead you'll give her some orders. Go to Room 9 and use the **ink ribbon**.

Go to Room 10. A tough hunter is directly in front of you and there's another down the hall which leads to Room 11. Go into Room 11 and use the **red jewel** at the tiger room to get the **Colt Python**. The Colt now gives you the power to kill the hunters in two or three shots!

If you need life go to Room 22 and use some of the **herbs**.

SNAKES ALIVE

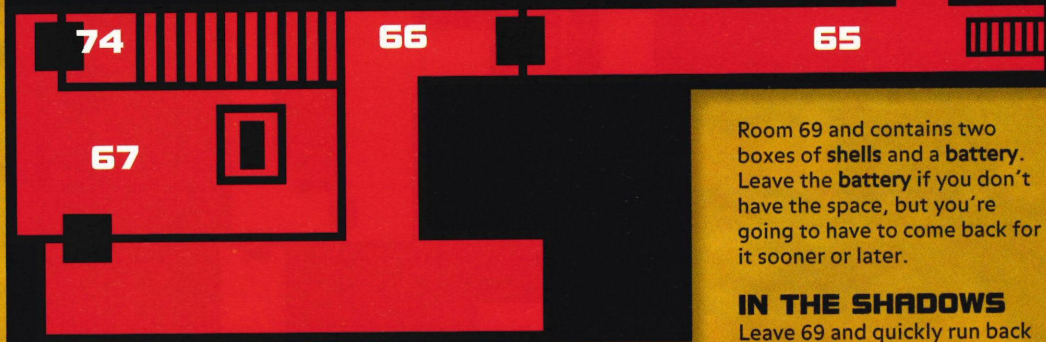
Now you have a long trek back to the storeroom – 20. Equip the Colt and head upstairs to Room 62. You should see a hunter in the hallway facing away from you. Walk close and



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MANSION / BASEMENT



let rip with two quick shots and. He's history.

Proceed to the end of Room 62 and into Room 33 which contains two zombies. If you have two shotgun rounds, use them to blow their heads off. Otherwise save your ammo and go to the door that leads to Room 63. Unlock it and the **helmet key** will become useless.

The snake room is activated by touching the piano in the corner. It will take numerous rounds to kill the snake, so have plenty of health and ammo to hand. He'll undoubtedly hit

you, so keep an **F-aid spray** or **red-green mixed herbs** and any other healing properties you can carry. Aim for his head and swivel round as he moves to keep hitting him. Use the Colt until it runs out. Once taken care of make sure you have the shotgun before you drop down into the hole.

GRAVE DANGER

You emerge in the small Room 64. Move to the gravestone and hit the switch to reveal a ladder down. Go down it and into Room 65.

The Colt will see off the zombies in one hit so take out the one here and the second one who guards the **shells**. Grab the shells and head for 66.

As you arrive, you can hear the noise of flesh being eaten. Walk round the corner and move toward the zombies, but don't attack until they stand. Leave the **herbs** unless you are desperate and move down into kitchen - Room 67.

In the kitchen there's a **small key** on the counter and a dying zombie near the lift. The Colt will only take one hit to kill him so put him out of his misery and get into the lift.

When you get to 68 you will find another a zombie. If you are low on ammo kill him off and walk to the door directly behind him. This is

Room 69 and contains two boxes of **shells** and a **battery**. Leave the **battery** if you don't have the space, but you're going to have to come back for it sooner or later.

IN THE SHADOWS

Leave 69 and quickly run back toward the lift where there's a zombie lurking by the entrance to 70. There's also a **green herb** in a small crevice if you're short. Go into 70 and be ready for a zombie.

Once you've taken care of him there's a desk in the right-hand corner. Use the **small key** and get the **Magnum rounds**. Behind the first bookcase is a zombie who's standing over a **scrapbook**. File it and move through the door to 71.

Continue straight from the door and you'll run you into a statue. Push it just enough to get around it and then push it towards the red switch. Stop to hit the switch and it will light a small area in the corner that the statue must be pushed over. Go into the small office and take the **MO disk** from the table.

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

Move back to Room 70 and push the bookcase level with the room marked 72 on the map to reveal a doorway. The secret observatory holds an **ink ribbon** and a **clip** if you have the space. Look out of the window and if you don't already have it, go and get the battery.

If you need health and have some ammo to spare head for Room 73. There's a zombie right next to the door coming in and another when you enter the room.

There are both **green** and **blue herbs** to collect in here. There are also two zombies feeding down at the end of the passage and a door that cannot be unlocked.

Move back to the lift and return to Room 67. Move to the

NEPTUNE

Before you even attempt to tackle them you must drain their water supply. Having done this their flapping bodies will be sitting ducks, and they only take one Beretta hit each to kill.

NEPTUNE



PLANT 42

If you're playing with Jill, a drop of poison will sort out Plant 42. Chris, however, has to go in with all guns blazing. The best approach is to run around the edge of the room taking potshots while avoiding the big blobs of acid that fall from the ceiling! The best way to avoid them is to keep an eye on the smaller drips which indicate the acid's landing position.

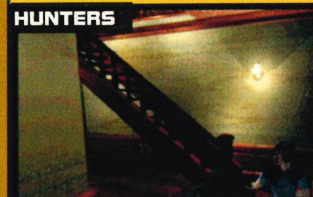
PLANT 42



HUNTERS

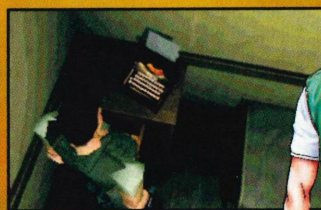
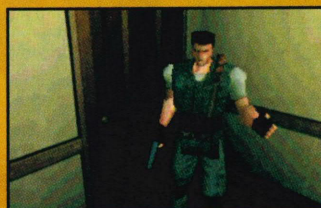
These crop up more and more as the game progresses. Slightly smaller than usual zombies, their incredible speed makes accuracy difficult. The Beretta takes about nine hits to finish them off, the shotgun takes about six and the Colt uses just three. So, if you can rattle off the Colt shots quickly you'll barely take a hit.

HUNTERS



CHIMERAS

The Chimera appear in the final few rooms of the game. Keep an eye on the shadows to give you a clue to their

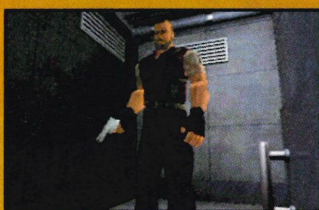
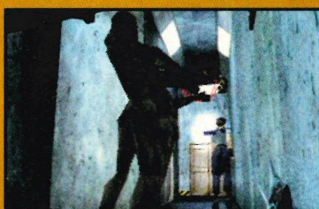
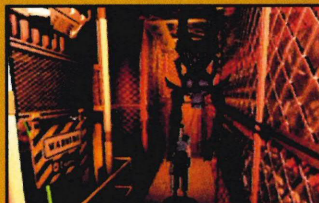
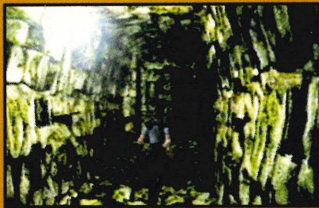
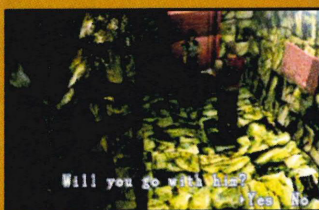


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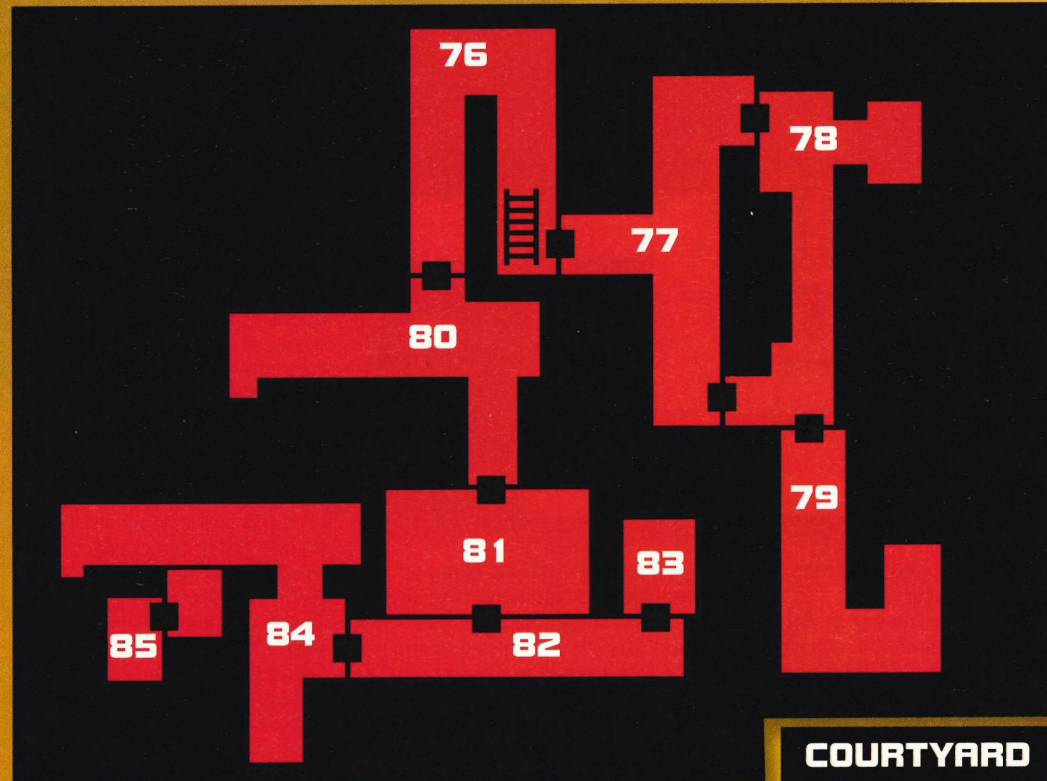
door leading to Room 74 and you'll be presented with a cutscene and a fresh zombie, ready to kill. Move down the stairs to Room 75.

HI HONEY, I'M HOME!

Move around the lift and unlock the double doors. You'll enter a familiar hallway (Room

3) and are greeted by two hunters. Even though you can't see them at first, it's wise to fire a few rounds down the hallway as they'll soon come into view. Take them on if you dare or get out quick! Proceed back to the storeroom in Room 9.

In 9, glance over your inventory and check you have **Doom book one**, the **square crank**, **battery** and any guns with bullets. Now head back to Room 21 – the outer passage.



In 21, there's a hunter blocking your path, however, with a little stealth he can easily be avoided.

Move through 39, 40 and across the water path. Pass the snakes and go down the lift to the lower courtyard. Use the **battery** on the other lift and go up. Move back to the large pool and use the **square crank** on the panel. It may also be a good idea to go back and store the **crank** because you'll no longer need it.

Once outside run to your left and to the now functional lift. Go back down to the lower courtyard and descend the ladder that was behind the waterfall. Any loaded guns should be close to hand. An **ink ribbon** here may come in handy.

FLAME-GRILLED

There is a typewriter round the corner in 76 so you can Save if you need to. Otherwise go into 77 – next to the ladder.

In here there's a flamethrower on the wall, but it only has limited fuel, so use it sparingly. Move into Room 78.

In the small section at the top of the room, is an **F-Aid spray** and some **shells**. Get these and head for 79.

Walk round the corner to find Enrico. He'll inform you of a double-crosser! But he does not get time to say who. Enrico has a **clip** but leave it if it fills up your last slot.

Move back to 78 and you'll encounter two hunters. Grab the **crank** that lies on the floor ahead and go back out to 77 for two more hunters.

Replace the flamethrower to open the door and exit. Walk back to the typewriter.

DEEPER AND DEEPER

Use the **crank** on the panel and you can walk through the door. Make sure you have one open inventory slot.

Get the flamethrower from Room 80 and run down to trigger a rock. Quickly run back and nip in by the entrance to avoid it. Walk back along to where the rock rolled from and a hunter will appear. Take the **Magnum rounds** if you need them and head through to Room 81.

Giant Spider! Keep running around it, and shoot only after it has spat acid at you. Three or four rounds using the Colt should finish it off. Leave and re-enter to get rid of all the smaller spiders.

To go through the door use the flamethrower if you have fuel left or the combat knife which is on the barrel by the web covering the exit. Go into 82 and then run into 83 avoiding the snakes.

TAKE A BREATH

In this Save room there is a **blue herb**, **F-Aid spray**, and an **ink ribbon**. If you're poisoned, use the **blue herb** or if you're just short of life, use the **F-Aid spray**. Save and take the **crank** and flamethrower with you.

Run to 82 and replace the flamethrower to open the door.

In Room 84 move to the right and down the passage. Use the **crank** three times on the panel to move the hole to the left. Run down and trigger a boulder then duck into the passage you just opened again to avoid it. Take the **map** and the **MO disk** from where the boulder was.

Now go into Room 85 and move the statue along the wall so it's level with the highlighted

area. Use the **crank** two times on the panel to push the statue away. Now you can get round and actually move it onto the highlighted area. **Doom book two** will be your reward.

DOOMED

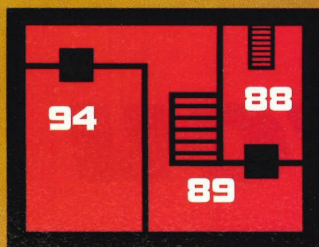
Return to 83, a storeroom, and put away the **crank**. Take **Doom book one**. Keep at least empty three slots and go back to 84.

Move to the left and use the lift to go up to the fountain area 86. From your inven-

tory select both the **Doom books** and then turn them around so that the pages are facing you. Now press the Action Button and they'll open. Match the medals to the appropriate ends of the fountain to reveal a set of stairs. Take the **herbs** from around the fountain before you descend.

Going down the stairs and into the lift will bring you out in Room 87 – Lab B1. Once here, walk around the corner ignoring the door for now, and go down the ladder.

In Room 88 there'll be a storeroom box. So take the **pistol** and any other weapons with ammo you still have and head through



to Room 89. Three zombies will be waiting to greet you, so if you're a bit strapped for ammo you should try dodge 'em. Otherwise use the Colt or shotgun as you'll only need three bullets to see them off. Get the **MO Disk** from the desk at the end of 89 and then go down.

CRYPTIC CODES

Don't bother killing anything when you emerge. Go into 91 at the bottom of the stairs and then into 92. Press the red switch to turn on the lights and then take the **researcher's letter**. Read it to get the log-on codes and passwords.

Look at the painting and note the names of the people. Move the bookshelf and press the switch to activate the ultraviolet light. Look at the painting again and then use the codes to decipher the password on the **researcher's letter**. A clip is in the box next to the sink and also a **green herb**. Leave the room.

Work your way on to 93, killing any zombies you come across – they still only take a single shot.

Start up the computer and enter your name as John and the password as Ada. Select floor B2 to open and you'll have to enter another password. Enter Mole and the door on B2 will be opened. Now open B3 before closing down the machine. Pick up the slides from the floor and move out and back upstairs.

HAVE WE MET?

Go back up the stairs and into Room 94.

Use the slides on the projector and on the pictures of the research team. One of them is a familiar face! You should also acquire a **security system file**. Open the panel on the wall to the left and hit the switch to move the wall panel. Get the **lab key** and return to 90.

Run to Room 95 dodging or killing the slow but deadly zom-

bies. Use the **lab key** on the lab door and discard the key.

Inside a zombie will be directly in front of you. There's also one behind each corner. Room 96 is a storeroom – inside is an **ink ribbon**, **Magnum rounds** and a **herb**. Save and take the **shotgun** and **Magnum** and one **MO disk** with you. Now go to Room 97.

First get the **shells** and the **red herb**. Position the two boxes so they cover the grates in the floor, *without* stepping on the switch. The stairs should then be pushed over the switch. Go through the air duct into Room 98.

Use an **MO disk** on the password machine in the corner of 98 to get Password Two. Collect the **Magnum rounds** from the shelf. Leave and be ready to shoot if you haven't already seen off all of the zombies. Go back to the save room and load up on **herbs**.

ZOMBIE CENTRAL

Run to the end of Room 91 and use the password on the terminal by the door. Go to the opposite side of the level and activate the power panel before making your way into Room 99.

Get Password Three from the terminal that is tucked around the corner. Obviously killing the ceiling hunters as you go! Then go into Room 100 and the main generator room. Activate the terminal on the left-hand side and run out. Look out for any of the hunters that you did not kill on the way through.

Equipped with the **MO disk** and a suitable weapon go into Room 101. Four zombies will be

waiting. Get the **fax** from the frame on the wall and use the **MO disk** on an output machine to get Password One. Go out and back to the password terminal at the end of 91 and enter the rest of the codes.

Use the final two codes to open all of the doors and go to room 102 where you'll find Jill locked in her cell. Return back to Room 95, round the corner to the lift and Rebecca should join you. You'll probably need a full round of the Magnum or shotgun and extras if possible.

Go up the lift and Wesker will reveal his true identity and the reason he's in the mansion – the Tyrant. Kill the Tyrant and then go to the computer terminal to unlock the door. Then take the lift down.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

Head back to Room 102, free Jill and keep an eye out for ceiling hunters.

Go back upstairs and the place is heaving with zombies! If you have the ammo now's the time to get rid of them. Conversely just run around them. Make sure you have a couple of open inventory spaces! Get to Room 87 and go through the emergency door that is right next to you as you emerge from the ladder. Run through the long passage and pick up the **battery** and put it in the socket to power up the lift. Take the **flare** from the box next to lift and use it anywhere on the Heliport. Await the return of Tyrant. Keep running away until Brad drops the **rocket launcher**. Fire this up and pump the sucker full of lead!

whereabouts. Aiming upwards, shoot them down onto the floor. They have a quick recovery time, so be ready to shoot them twice more to kill them. If they do manage to get back onto the ceiling, you'll have to move pretty fast to avoid their slashing claws. Whatever happens, don't let them get close enough to 'hug' you, as you'll take massive damage.

YAWN: THE RETURN

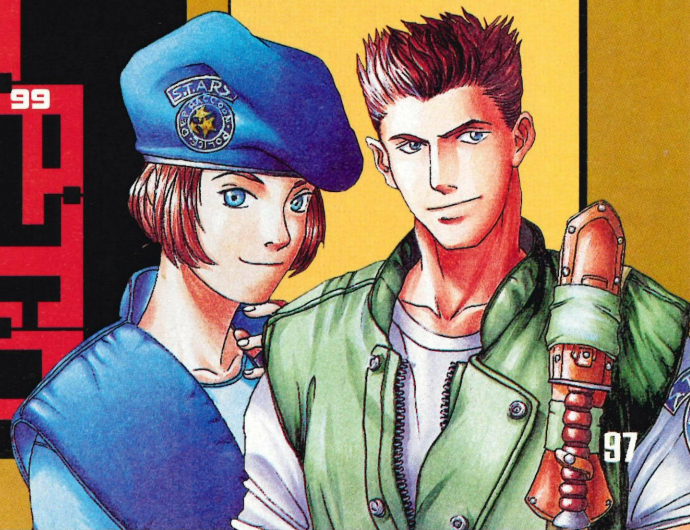
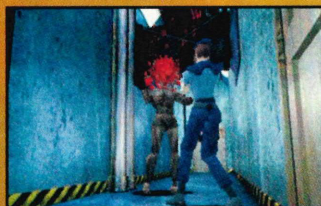
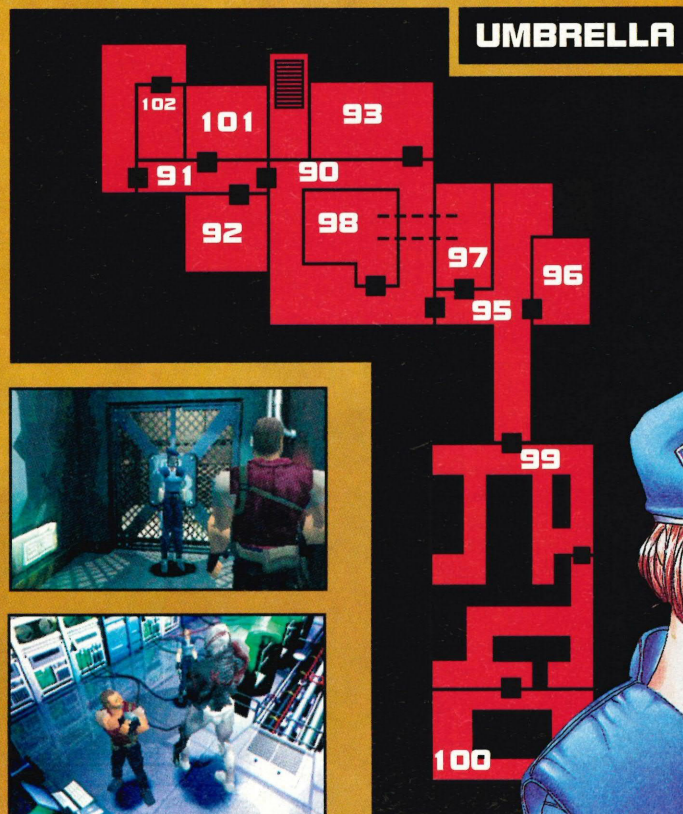
The snake is back! This time it's the final battle to the death. And more than likely, you'll be the one who dies the first couple of times. When you meet him you should have about 12–16 rounds of the Colt left. Run to the far end of the room and turn to face the oncoming snake. The only thing to do now is stay put and let rip with everything you have. Aim for his head and keep healing yourself with herbs and he should kick the bucket before you do – just about!

THE TYRANT

The final boss looks awesome, but sadly doesn't prove as tough the first time out. Load up the Colt and when he's far enough away turn and shoot him once or twice. Now run away before turning and letting off a couple more rounds. After about six hits, he'll drop. When you meet him again there's little point in trying to kill him, so keep running away until Brad drops the rocket launcher which is the only weapon capable of finishing the Tyrant off. It's best to run in straight lines across the helipad and when he runs to swipe at you, change directions to avoid his claws.



TYRANT



Olympic Soccer

Despite its simplistic appearance, *Olympic Soccer's* playability has toppled the likes of *Adidas Power Soccer* and *Actua Soccer* from the top of the PlayStation league. Now, courtesy of US Gold's Chris Dolman, prepare to become a veritable Cantona of the championships via our exhaustive tips and tactics.



GENERAL PLAYING TIPS

DISTRIBUTION

You won't get very far in this game by acting like Maradona and going on lengthy solo runs. Even the most inept teams are capable of making half decent tackles so the more you pass it around the further you'll progress. Also, every player has a different set of attributes, which is important to remember when trying out some of the more gruelling actions. It could be that while one player seems slow and weak on the ball, another will perform the same move with all the grace and style of Eric Cantona. It's not too important to know where all your players are on the pitch — just a quick glance at the scanner and a tap on the pass button whilst facing 'roughly' in the right direction will send the ball skimming across the turf to the team-mate you are aiming at.



WING PLAY

One of the best ways of creating scoring opportunities is to play the ball along the wing. As well as just passing the ball between your players until you get a clear space on the wings, the 'shoot' kick can be used to leave the defenders looking dazed and confused. When you are deep in your own half, just shoot the ball at medium to maximum power and height (depending on how deep you are) and start running towards it. Because the shot is powerful, it will usually take a while for the opposition players to start running back. This will give you plenty of time to either line up for a shot or cross the ball into the box. You can do a similar move with the 'pass' kick, which is more accurate than the 'shoot' method. If you are already on the wing and running down the line, just tap the pass button and

send the ball hard and fast along the ground to roughly around the opposition corner area. If, however, you have the ball in the midfield area and want to send a player down the wing, just pass the ball diagonally forward where it will should roll to a stop just short of the sideline.

INTERCEPTION

There's a trick to intercepting almost every goal-kick or drop-kick the opposition keeper makes. When the goalie is about to take the kick, place one of your own men next to the player that the keeper is going to kick the ball to (where the cursor is placed). As soon as he makes the kick, start running away from him in the opposite direction. Now, just as the ball starts to drop to the ground, run back towards the player you were standing next to and jump as if to head the ball. If your timing is right you should meet the ball before the opposition player and head it back towards their goal.

ONE-TWO

The fanciest way of passing — play the ball along the ground to your team-mate then tap the pass button again just before it reaches him. You will resume control over the original man as soon as you hit the button and your team-mate will send the ball straight back into your path as you sprint up the field. If you press the 'chip' button before the pass reaches your team-mate, he will actually lob the ball over your head as you charge towards the goal. Both these moves will split the defence, but don't try them if you have another player just ahead of you, as the return pass will not be effective. Once you've perfected this, try running into the ball and hitting it on the volley. Scoring a goal from a 'chip one-two' is absolutely amazing.



TACKLING

Tackling is a major part of the game, and mastery of the well-timed slide move is essential. A lot of the time you can just run into the player at full speed and barge him off the ball. This is all very well until you try it on a player who is physically stronger, in which case you are in for a pasting. Alternatively, you could try a last ditch 'sliding tackle' but if you time the challenge badly, or go in too hard, the referee won't hesitate in showing the red or yellow card. Coming in with this move from behind is also likely to get you booked unless you get as close to the player as possible before sliding into the back of him. Against the skilful teams like Germany and Brazil, it's advisable to pass the ball as soon as you have stolen it as the stronger sides are extremely good at recovering from a tackle and snapping at your heels to recover it. When the opposition attack your goal area, never go in from the front with a sliding tackle. If you miss, your defender will be left sitting on his back-side on the edge of the box and the attackers will have a clear shot at goal. Instead, wait for as long as possible until the attacker runs close to one of your men. Now is the best time to make the tackle, although running into them and 'barging' them off the ball is a safer option if you don't want to risk giving away a penalty.

THE BACKHEEL

Try using the backheel move (effected using L1) as much as possible. It's a really good way to make space and get out of tight spots when surrounded by defenders. Don't worry if you can't see a team-mate behind you to receive the pass as one usually appears from off-screen in the nick of time. A good way to make room for a shot at goal is to lure the defender out on to the sidelines and then backheel the ball towards the box. Hopefully one of your men will be there to take advantage of this opportunity.

INTO SPACE

When passing the ball it's not a good idea to set up camp and wait for it to land in your lap. If you don't sprint towards it as it approaches you, the defender marking your player will have a good chance of stealing the ball. Your marker is also likely to make a sliding tackle the second you touch the ball, so try to make a sharp turn to the left or right as soon as you gain possession. If the opposition player does make a serious challenge you should be able to spin round and lose him completely.

GENERAL SCORING TIPS

POT SHOTS

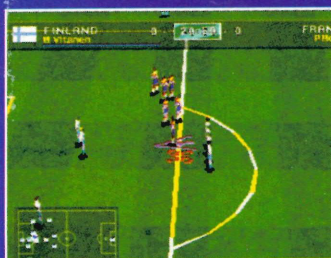
Olympic Soccer's goalkeepers are pretty good so you'll have to work pretty hard get a shot past them. But, like real football, it's always worth taking the occasional pot-shot from a long way out. The keepers don't usually react to these shots until very late so the best way of scoring a screamer is by bending the ball away from him and putting it as close to the stanton (the very top corner of the goal) as possible. Against some of the less skillful teams, just performing this move aimed at the post will be enough to leave the goalie with nothing but a handful of fresh air – and you one goal closer to ultimate victory.

THE THROW-IN TACTIC

It is possible to score directly from a throw-in if you can get your man in the right position. When you get a throw-in that's near the box, throw it long and high towards the goal and try to get a player underneath it. Once he's in place, hold down the header button and aim the D-pad towards the goal. This should produce a 'bullet-header' that hammers into the back of the net. This type of goal is hardly ever saved, no matter how good the keeper, but it's tricky to get your player positioned under the moving ball.

VOLLEYS

One of the most spectacular volleys you can score is from a corner. When the ball cursor appears position it over the small semi-circle on the edge of the box so that your player walks over to this spot. Now take the corner by hitting the ● button and immediately press the ■ button to line up the receiving player. When the ball is about an inch from your man hold down the ■ button while pressing the Dpad towards the goal. If timed correctly this move will unleash a volley that should curve into one of the bottom corners of the goal and leave the keeper with no chance. This move can be executed with you player anywhere in or around the box but this position gives the most accurate and deadly results.



DIY

Although the auto-cross function is great for the novice player, you have no control over where the ball will go which will limit your choice of shots. Players skilled in the art of controlling speed and direction will get more satisfaction out of chipping the ball into the box themselves. This will unfortunately make lining the move up impossible, but the rush you get when you score a spectacular goal without the aid of any automatic devices is well worth the additional effort.

AUTO-CROSSING

Easily the biggest factor in scoring from crosses and corners is the ability to get a man on the ball and give yourself a fighting chance of scoring. If you cross the ball in using the pass or chip moves you will have to rely on skill and timing to get your player to the pass. However, if you are taking a corner or using the auto-cross function (R2), you can use the 'chest' move (via the ■ button) to automatically line your man up with the ball. This will give you more time to wind up for a hammer shot into the back of the net. As soon as the corner kick or cross has been made press the 'chest' button to line up the receiving player with the ball. When the ball has almost reached your man press and hold down the 'shoot' button for maximum speed as he blasts it past the keeper.

BICYCLE KICK

Definitely the hardest way of scoring, requiring a great deal of skill and practice. As the ball floats in, turn your man away from the direction you want to kick it and hit the ▲ button. Holding down the button will produce the best results as far as speed and power are concerned, but be careful not to turn you man too soon or he will go jogging off into midfield.



ROUNDING

Arguably the most difficult way to score is by taking the ball around the keeper and slotting it into an empty net. As you near the six-yard box, the keeper will charge towards you and dive for your ankles to grab the ball. When you see him dive, spin on your heels and run in an arc around his body. Make this move fast though, as it doesn't take him long to recover and return to his original position. Alternatively, if another striker from your team has followed you into the box you can simply nudge the ball across to him as the keeper dives, leaving him free to blast it into the back of the net. Both of these goals are spectacular when successfully executed and well worth having a go at every now and then.

HEADING

Heading is probably the safest bet on scoring from a cross or corner with loads of control over the direction of the ball. If you decide to take this easy option (shame on you) be sure to hold down the button so that you bullet-header for maximum speed and power, and don't forget to aim the ball into the corner away from the keeper. Another tactic is to position the cursor on the goal line, and send the nearest players diving in for a very flukey touch.

FREE KICKS

INDIRECT

As well as blasting the ball as hard as you can, you can play a neat little chip into the box for your team mates to pick up and shoot from. They will have automatically positioned themselves strategically for a shot at goal so hitting the X button will make them run into the path of the ball leaving you to press either the header, volley or overhead kick button at the right moment.



DIRECT

Free-kicks work in exactly the same way as normal controls where you can either chip, shoot or pass the ball into the path of your player. If a free-kick is awarded anywhere near the box don't even think about blasting through the wall as the ball will simply bounce back away from the goal. One way to combat this is to take the cursor wide of the wall and bend the ball as much as you need. You could also try lifting the ball slightly as you bend it to put the ball into the top corner of the net. Be careful not to apply too much lift when shooting as any kind of after-touch will have disastrous results. If you are far enough out you can even try shooting the ball over the wall, but this is very tricky as the crossbar tends to get in the way a bit.

DEFENDING AGAINST FREE-KICKS

Defending free-kicks is not easy at all, especially against some of the sharp shooters from teams like Germany, Brazil and England. As well as trying to head the ball out of danger when the kick is taken you can choose to add or take men away from your defensive wall using the X and ■ buttons. You can place up to seven men in the wall, which should keep any direct shots from hitting the mark, however this will leave you very light on defenders should the ball rebound to one of the attacking players in the box. You could choose to disband the wall altogether but this is not advisable against the more skillful teams. Ideally you should have five men in the wall and just keep belting the header button in the vain hope of clearing the ball as it comes in. Alternatively, position a player behind where the shot marker is, and run and jump as soon as the ball is kicked – in a similar method to intercepting a goal kick.





Licence? to Sell●

*Film stars,
sporting personalities, comic
strip heroes... there was a time
when you couldn't switch on a video
games system without some famous
face or other leering out at you.
So where did they all go?
Adam Peters picks up
the trail...*

Research means different things to different people. In the world of science it involves slaving away over a microscope and test tube for 12 hours a day. In the world of *PlayStation Plus*, research means going down to the basement and digging out an old games magazine.

The mag, picked at random, is almost five years old. Inside is a Top Ten software chart. Four of the titles in the chart are compilations. These are the other six; *Terminator 2*, *Final Fight*, *Manchester United Europe*, *Hero Quest*, *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* and *Viz*. Licensed games every one of them; film, coin-op, football team, board game, film/comic strip, adult comic.

Five years on, take a look at the PlayStation shelves and you'll be hard pushed to find any licences at all, apart from coin-ops which don't really count because they're games to start off with. We've got *Alien Trilogy*, soon we'll have *Die*

Hard Trilogy. That's more or less it, chartwise.

So what happened? Have licence holders wised up to the games industry and started asking for more money? Has the industry wised up to the fact that an awful lot of the licensed games of yore were a pile of crap? Are Nineties game players, particularly in the older PlayStation market, too sophisticated to translate a photo of Schwarzenegger on the box into a reason for purchase?

We think that licensed games are cool, as long as it's the right licences. With this in mind, we picked out seven products that we think would make interesting games. We assembled a panel, representatives of four software houses plus the man from Sony. We spoke to the licence holders and tried to find out who might be interested. But before the auction begins, let's check out the credentials of our panellists. What experience of licences do the companies have? And, more importantly, are they ready to repent for their past sins?

You got a Licence? for that

A few years ago there was a licensing free-for-all in the games industry. Telly shows and every film you can think of and half a dozen more came in video game form. Even McDonalds were involved in two titles, one featuring old clownface himself. Licences dominated, but unfortunately the majority of them were poo. So what's changed between then and now? Five leading lights of the games industry 'fess up.

Acclaim: Simon Smith Wright

You're just about the only company still doing licences, aren't you?

"I wouldn't have thought so. Our catalogue is half and half, maybe slightly less licensed products."

So what licensed games have you got coming up?

"There's *Space Jam*, licensed from the forthcoming Warners film with Michael Jordan and the Loony Tunes characters.

We've got a lot of sports licences; WWF, NBA. They're not the same as old school licences."

Which comes first, the licence or the game?

"What's changed is that now people know they need to work together. You can't sell any old game with a licence slapped on it, there needs to be a good game there. Licences do help with marketing. If there are two identical wrestling games and one's got a WWF licence then a kid who likes WWF is going to buy that one."

Isn't it the case that sometimes more money and effort has been put into acquiring a licence than into writing a decent game to go with it?

"I'm sure some people have been guilty of that. Whether we have, I don't know, I'd hope not. People think a movie licence is the easiest thing in the world to produce, but it's not. In past games like *Judge Dredd* and *Batman Forever* we worked very closely with the film production house, digitising the actors using motion capture techniques. We tend to work more closely with the film companies now than we did in the past. We all know that games sell through word of mouth rather than marketing, so a poor quality game won't sell, regardless of any licence."

Isn't there always a risk of games being rushed to coincide with the release of the movie?

"It's very rare from Acclaim's experience that the game and film have ever come out together. *Batman Forever* came out three months after the film and sold really well. Look at *Alien Trilogy* – there hasn't been an *Alien* film for years, but the game is selling phenomenally because it's a brilliant game. This proves that the quality of the game makes more difference than the timing of the release."

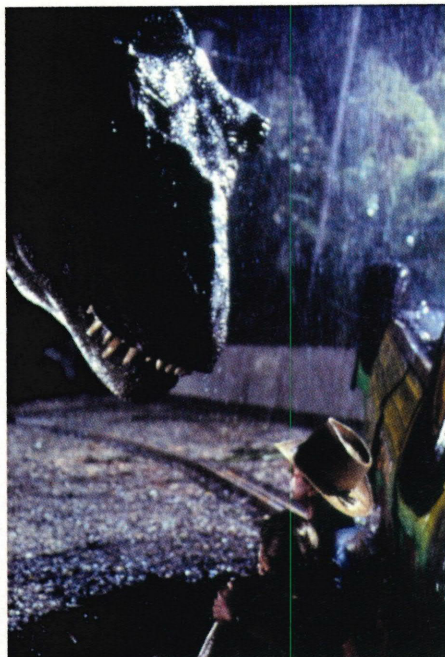
How much of a gamble is involved in signing up a film licence?

"It's a big gamble. The main reason you're seeing less film licences now is the development times. On the SNES and Megadrive it took maybe nine months to develop a game. As the PlayStation is a new technology, game development times at the moment are 18 to 24 months. We're at the stage where all we have to go on when

we sign up a film licence is the script. We often don't even know what actors are going to be in it. The film could bomb and that wouldn't be good for the game, but that's the risk we take."

"You can't sell any old game with a licence slapped on it, there needs to be a good game there."

Ocean: Steven Hey



Tell us about Ocean's licences...

"We've done a lot of them in the past. Much of Ocean's success has been built on licences. We did *Rambo: First Blood*, the first ever movie licence. We licensed a lot of American products. We did the first *Simpsons* game, for instance. We've had a lot of success with licensed games. *Jurassic Park* is one of the biggest selling games of all time. It was also the first million dollar licence. Nowadays a lot of software houses pay that much for a film licence and no-one blinks an eyelid."

You're not doing many licences now, though. Is this a deliberate policy?

"Yes, we're trying to build up our own properties; *TFX*, *TFX Military* and *Worms*. We're continuing those series. We are still doing licences, we've got *Mission: Impossible* coming out on the Nintendo 64 and PC next year. We've also recently announced that we've got the UEFA licence from next year onwards. We're going to do a series of games on the PlayStation and PC, using the licence the same way Electronic Arts use their FIFA licence. There are fewer licences as we're concentrating on our own products. These days we'll only licence something if we think it can make a successful game. Ocean, like a lot of other people, has been guilty in the past of letting a licence carry a game. There's no game company that hasn't been guilty of that."

Is there any excuse for the dreadful licensed games we've seen in the past?

"A good licence was always a good seller, so there was the temptation to not put enough effort into the game engine. People were buying a licence then going to developers and telling them they had to write the game in six months to tie in with the movie. They were on tight deadlines and couldn't put much into it. People in the games industry started using terms like 'interactive movie'. Films were sexy and good to have as licences. We forgot that films were passive experiences and games were active. The games industry knows its own worth now. We've got the movie industry coming to us now, making films out of *Doom* and *Super Mario Bros*. Film companies are getting involved in games publishing, we're seeing companies like Fox Interactive and Dreamworks springing up."

"We've got the movie industry coming to us now, making films out of *Doom* and *Super Mario Bros*."

Which comes first, the licence or the game?

"With movies it's normally the licence that comes first. With the UEFA licence, the two came together by coincidence. We were in negotiation with UEFA. Meanwhile, Ocean France were working with a company called Power & Magic on a soccer game. The game arose separately to the negotiations, but when we saw it we knew it would work really well with the UEFA licence."

Is it a case of quality rather than quantity now?

"I hope so. *Alien Trilogy* is brilliant. *Die Hard* looks like it's going to be really good too. From Ocean's point of view, we're using our Hanna Barbera licence, *Zoiks*, really imaginatively. You see very few dud movie licences now. As the licensors become more knowledgeable, they are becoming more demanding about the quality of the games."

Codemasters: Richard Eddy

So tell us about *Micro Machines*...

"We never buy a licence then cobble together a game, we always have the game first. Then we think about how best to market it. *Micro Machines* was originally called *Californian Buggy Boys*. That's what it would have been called if we hadn't been working with Galoob on the American distribution of the Game Genie [Codemasters' game cheat device]. Galoob make the *Micro Machines* toys and it all developed from there. It was a unique twist for us and worked very well."

Only kids know about the toys? Is the licence still valid in the PlayStation market?

"My perception of *Micro Machines* is that they are an amusing toy for 12 year-olds, but suddenly they have got a cult following amongst twenty year-olds. Now they have started doing miniaturised versions of vehicles from *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, so the toys are becoming collector's items."

What other licences have Codemasters got?

"Sporting personalities. There's *Sampras Tennis*, and we've got *Jonah Lomu Rugby* coming up. We always go for real sports people. Someone like Agassi will endorse anything, but Sampras tends not to. He's a real tennis player but we managed to get him to endorse our product. Having a name makes it easier to push the game through the trade, retail and the press. It also creates a brand identity. *Sampras Tennis* is *Codemasters Tennis*."

Was Sampras involved in the production at all?

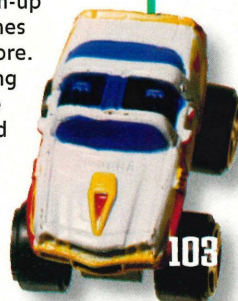
"We haven't physically done anything with him in our studio, we took film of him playing and used it to electronically recreate his moves. He sees the graphics and if he doesn't think it accurately replicates his movement he'll suggest changes. Different people have different amounts of input. We're just starting to work with Jonah Lomu, the rugby player. Jonah is a games player - he's got a Megadrive. He talked about *Micro Machines*. He's played rugby video games and pointed out things he thinks have been wrong in previous titles. He's had lots of suggestions."

How much of a gamble is a licence?

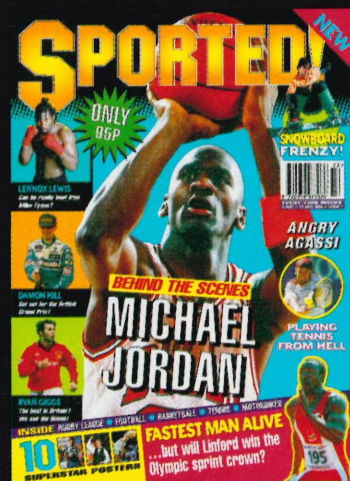
"It has to be a gamble, but we wouldn't buy a licence if we didn't think we could make money from it. We never pay more than the licence is worth, we wouldn't give Sampras a ridiculous amount like two million quid. £50,000 or whatever. That may eat away 20p from our profits, but we'll absorb that for the profile and extra sales we should gain."

There so few licensed games today. Why?

"People are looking more carefully at where the game is. It was really bad three years ago when the licence was not being used - no plot or characters - just a beat-em-up with a film logo on the front. Games players are not that stupid any more. There were a lot of licences coming out in '93 and '94 that were a pile of shit. Customers got burned and it's sad that software houses thought they could profit like that. People have got wise. These days a big licence is no guarantee of big sales."



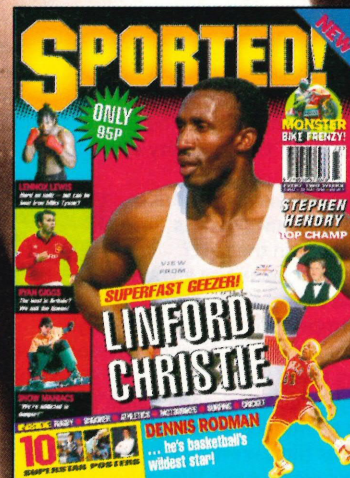
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MEGA STARS



MEGA SPORTS



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Virgin: Simon Jeffrey

Got any hot licences then?

"To be honest, we haven't got much in the way of licensed games at the moment. We're starting to get into the sports market with the NHL hockey licence. We've still got some relationships with Disney, porting the games we've already done (*Aladdin* and *The Lion King*) to other formats. That's about it, though."

Is it easier to market a licensed game?

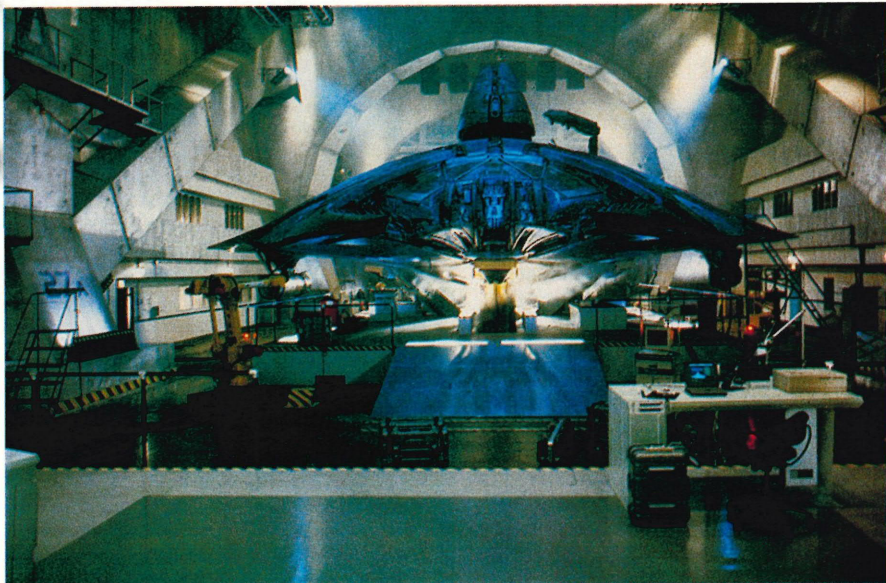
"In some ways, yes. Licences will always sell. The main buyers of licensed products are kids, the people who will buy lunchboxes with a licence on are the ones who will also buy a game because of the licence. Licences are more expensive to buy now because of their previous success. A lot of the big media companies are starting to get into the games market themselves now - Time Warner, Disney, etc. There's less reason to sell a licence when you can make the game yourself. A lot of games they develop don't get to the market on time, so they don't bother releasing them. That's having quite some effect on the number of licensed games out there."

Any other reasons for the lack of licensed games?

"Owners of 32bit games machines and PCs tend to be older and so less inclined to buy licences, though things like *Star Wars* appeal more to that age group. There have been so many disastrous licensed games in the past that retailers and journalists have become cynical of licences. Software houses are more wary of doing licensed games now."



Sony: Alan Wellsman



Where did all the film licences go?

"In the past, so many film licences were crap. Someone got hold of a licence but did not have time to do anything decent with it. So now, even if you bring out a good licensed game, you still suffer from that stigma of past disasters."

Is timing important to the marketing of a licensed game?

"You are going to see things becoming more synched up. Within Sony, the film and game development will link up at the script stage. We can do that now because we have the mainstream credibility that the Sega and Nintendo 16bit machines didn't have. The timing needs to come together. Look at *Independence Day*, the film's out now but the game won't be here until next year. That's not good enough, is it? It's ironic really that at the time the quality of the licensed games is rising, the market timing isn't working."

Are games going to start having a strong enough brand identity that we no longer need licences?

"We were talking about this in the office recently with relation to *Tekken 2*. *Tekken* sold over a million copies in Japan, because over there it's an established brand. The PlayStation is at an early stage, it's going to grow much bigger. Games like *WipEout* will establish their own branding. Personally I'd go for an original game every time. Licences are all right just as long as it really is a good game. Frankly a licence is a good hook, but if the game is shit, you've shot yourself in the foot."



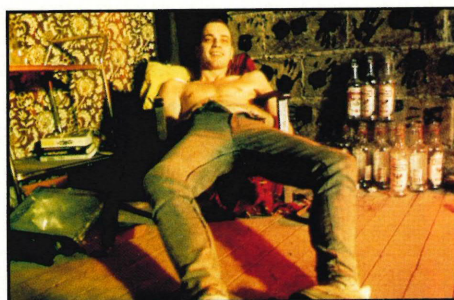
INDEPENDENCE DAY MAY WELL BE THE BIGGEST MOVIE OF 1996, BUT THE GAME WON'T BE AROUND UNTIL 1997.

Trainspotting, Eurotrash, Loaded magazine, Guinness, Pogs, Topless Darts and the Church of England. Are these licences the future of PlayStation gaming? Find out what our panel think over the page...

the licensed games that we want to see...

The Magnificent Seven

You can stuff your Schwarzenegger, bin your Batman and do something beginning with F to your FIFA. It's 1996, kitsch is king. Lad culture is here. Beer, boobs and, er, Bibles. Over the next three pages we focus on the seven products that *PlayStation Plus* believes, however wrongly, could be the smash hit game licences of 1997 and beyond. Why do we think that? What sort of game do we want to see? Is the licence holder ready to do business? Will our panel of four industry experts be reaching for their cheque-books? And would Lord Sony ban the game? These are the questions, and those (over on the right) are the answers.



Trainspotting



A couple of years ago, you could film yourself on a camcorder doing the weekly shopping, and before you'd loaded the fridge, someone like Acclaim would have thrust a contract in front of you. Today, the biggest British film in years has yet to show any sign of making it onto a video game. Okay, so the plot of the movie is a little dicey; bloke takes heroin, bloke gives up heroin, bloke tries to sell a shitload of heroin to the man who wrote England's 1994 World Cup song. But unlike the Scottish football team, you could still make a game of it, couldn't you?

LICENCE TO SELL

Annie Garwood, Reed Books: "Obviously we'd look at any proposals we received and discuss them with the author, looking at what was being offered. Having said that, it seems unlikely at first thought that something like *Trainspotting* would come out on a medium like video games."

LICENCE TO BUY

Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "I haven't seen the film, but I understand it's quite bleak with a strong message. We'd need to do the game in an original way, we wouldn't want to do it just as a hip thing without incorporating the film's message. That's a difficult one."

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "I'd love to do a *Trainspotting* game. We could approach a game the same way they approached the film, taking the most enjoyable sections of the book as small scenarios. There would be a lot of work involved and everyone would have a problem with the drugs element, but it shows both the good and bad aspects."

Steven Hey, Ocean: "We'd have to do a shoot-em-up."

Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "We'd love to do it, as long as we could go all the way. It would need to be incredibly fast, an arcade game rather than an adventure. Adventure games require thinking and *Trainspotting* doesn't."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "*Trainspotting* focuses on dangerous issues, but the film was aimed at the same market as the PlayStation, so I don't see why someone couldn't do a game. As long as it wasn't just about trying to score heroin, though it's difficult to imagine what else it could be. The film and book were brilliant, but as a game it would probably be complete crap."

Eurotrash



A leather clad grandmother beats a whip against a wall, an old sailor is painting a picture with his own crap, while a couple of German blokes run around in their

underpants. It's either a party at the features editor's house or it's the latest episode of *Eurotrash*, a thirty-minute weekly burst of filth on Channel 4. We want a game featuring the Romeo Cleaners (ugly near-naked Germans) travelling the continent in pursuit of the sex-mad and the clinically insane. And we want it now.

LICENCE TO SELL

Graham Moore, Rapido TV: "There are convoluted contractual agreements between us and Channel 4. We both have rights in the show, but we're more keen on the promotion aspect so any approach should be made through us. Perhaps the game could be a *Eurotrash* tour? It would certainly be very different to the other games out there. We're very keen on being approached. If it's going to make us money, we're well up for it."

LICENCE TO BUY

Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "I haven't really watched it, but it sounds brilliant. Very workable. Lots of media interest, lots of PR potential."

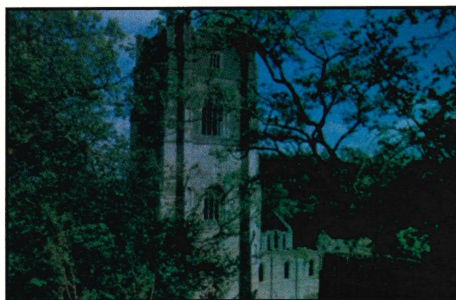
Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "I'd love to be involved in a *Eurotrash* title. It would be a very funny experience to play once. It could be quite hilarious and I worry that the hilarity would overtake the gameplay. Rather than a whole game, *Eurotrash* gives you ideas of things to put in other games. The secret character in *Sampras Extreme Tennis*, a rubber-clad Miss Whiplash type, owes a lot to *Eurotrash*."

Steven Hey, Ocean: "Richard would have a field day with *Eurotrash*. It's cool, there are two great characters there. We'd have the licence tomorrow, just use lots of FMV of Ocean France's offices."

Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "An interesting one. Less of a game, more a multimedia nonsense with lots of buttons, hot areas, and things to do. Plenty of full motion video. The problem is that outside the UK, no-one would want to buy it."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "*Eurotrash* on the PlayStation makes total sense. I don't know about the actual game content, but we wouldn't have a problem with the idea of a *Eurotrash* game."



Guinness

There were Chupa Chupps lollies plastered all over *Zool*, Penguin biscuits galore in *James Pond* and even a whole game based on 7-Up (*Cool Spot*). That was in the old days, when games systems were marketed at kids. Now, on the altogether more adult PlayStation, how about a game based on Ireland's finest export? You could even combine the brewery and publishing sides of Guinness within the same game. Firstly your character would drink several pints of the black nectar and then he'd attempt to become the world's tallest man.

LICENCE TO SELL

Carl Lyons, Guinness: "Guinness is always interested in new opportunities for promoting its brands. Computer games are an opportunity we have considered. The traditional difficulty is the danger of appealing to under-18s, which we clearly would never do. However, with the continued growth of adults using home computers and games, this is arguably less of a problem now."

LICENCE TO BUY

Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "I don't think it's possible. I wouldn't make a game out of Guinness as its image changes with the whim of marketing people, from a man dancing round a pint to that Louis Armstrong track. You'd be hard pushed to find out what Guinness means and turn it into a game. If they pay us lots of money they can be on an advertising hoarding in one of our sports games."

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "With Guinness you're getting dangerously close to an interactive movie. You'd be wobbling in front of a pint of Guinness, wobbling from left to right trying to drink it. For most people Guinness just means those adverts of a man dancing round a pint. I think Guinness is best left to college bars, where it can gather dust."

Steven Hey, Ocean: "There might be ethical problems, but drink is no stranger to games. It can be done. It would be dark and mysterious, a brooding gothic affair. *Resident Evil* with a wry sense of humour."

Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "I'd love to do a Guinness game. It would be an adult adventure game. There's a lot of Guinness fans here at Virgin, that's for sure."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "An alcohol-related game would definitely have to be an 18 certificate."



Church of England

It's the biggest club in the land, with 40% of the population claiming membership, though far less go to the weekly meetings. Games publishers could focus on the Church itself, its political squabbles and in-fighting, or base their game on the many action scenes in the Bible. You start off controlling Three Wise Men, racing your opponent's shepherds across the desert in pursuit of a star. Later levels feature tricky puzzles like trying to feed a hill full of people with only a French stick and a tin of sardines.

LICENCE TO SELL

Steve Jenkins, Church House: "It's possible that the right game could attract a nod from someone at the C of E, though the Church as a body tends not to endorse things. Would it be blasphemous to feature Jesus in a video game? It depends how he's featured. Jesus has been portrayed in various ways in the past, from the Sistine Chapel to *Spitting Image*. There's nothing inherent in video games that says Jesus couldn't be featured."

LICENCE TO BUY

Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "Fantastic. I like that one. I'd do a C of E game but it wouldn't be very nice, political with lots of nasty elements from the past, like the Spanish Inquisition. An Edgar Allen Poe style game where you throw people into Medieval Hell and call the game *The Church of England*. I wouldn't do a serious C of E licence. Who do you market it towards; mums, dads and vicars?"

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "It would be very linear. You get up on Sunday morning, go to church, read the Order of Service. The same thing every week." Steven Hey, Ocean: "No-one has ever done a Bible licence. You could do a series of RPGs, there's loads of stuff in there."

You'd have to start with the New Testament. There are loads of special effects in the Old Testament (parting seas, etc) that would really push the PlayStation to the limit." Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "No way. Absolutely not. Frankly there are a lot more fans of Guinness here at Virgin than of the Bible."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "We have a company edict that religion is one of the things we don't touch ourselves, but if a software house wanted to release a C of E game we wouldn't have a problem with it."



Loaded

The biggest publishing success story of recent times. *Loaded* magazine has tapped into a vein, found traces of blood in the alcohol, and kept on tapping. The combination of gung-ho attitude and extreme drunken lechery makes for a perfect PlayStation title. Playing a *Loaded* reporter, you travel the globe, completing dangerous tasks of survivalism, scoring bonus points for drinking beer and photographing women's cleavages.

LICENCE TO SELL

Piers Townley, *Loaded*: "I think we probably would be interested, depending on the rough sum of money being offered. Possibly a very visual role-playing shoot-em-up, not involving shooting but just going on rampages round the *Loaded* offices. A race against production schedules, being chased by designers, mad marketing people and James, the mad controller. It would have to be an 18 certificate, but perhaps we could do a cartoony version for kids."

LICENCE TO BUY

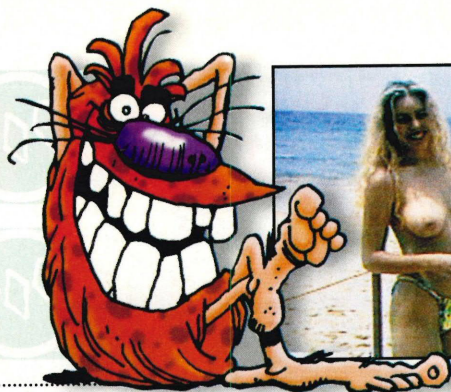
Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "We would not use a *Loaded* licence. The magazine covers every aspect of lad culture, but if we were going to go for a game based on lad culture we'd probably look at a *Men Behaving Badly* licence."

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "What could you do? Drink beer and shag birds? Better in real life I think."

Steven Hay, Ocean: "There would be definite ethical questions, it would probably be some sort of bikini orientated porn thing with Pamela Anderson in it. A point-and-perv adventure. *Loaded* is just a UK product though, and to do a licence it has to be known at least across Europe." Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "The possibility has been spoilt now that Gremlin have brought out a game with the same name. *Loaded* magazine is the sort of licence that every publisher will say they'd like to do, but few would have the balls."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "*Loaded* is our natural home and our natural partner. We all advertise there and do our PR there, so we wouldn't have a problem with it as a game licence at all."



Pogs

Those multi-coloured crisps might not taste very nice, but they are the biggest kids' craze for years. If the video games industry is serious about attracting younger people to the PlayStation, a game licensed from the cardboard circle cult would be perfect. Now that UK distributors Waddingtons have stopped stocking Pogs, a video game is just the boost the phenomenon needs. You wouldn't even need to program a game, just bung ten blank PlayStation discs in a box and let people play with them. Giant black Pogs. Cool!

LICENCE TO SELL

Dex McFadden, World Pog Federation: "We'd be very interested. I don't know what sort of game it would be, I'm not a video games producer, but I know it'd be really neat."

LICENCE TO BUY

Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "You'd have to make the game as addictive as Pogs themselves. If you could capture that addictive nature, it would be very profitable, although the PlayStation market is too old at the moment."

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "I have no idea what one does with a Pog. I know you get them in crisp packets, but we tend to just throw them across the room. Perhaps we could release a *Pogs Take Your Eye Out* simulator. Two characters stand at opposite sides of the screen and try to gouge someone's eye out throwing Pogs. It would have to be a £2.99 budget Spectrum game."

Steven Hey, Ocean: "To develop something really original would take 18 months, by which time Pogs will have gone the way of the Rubik's cube. Had we had Mystic Meg vision two years ago and realised these little cardboard discs would infiltrate kid's minds so heavily, we'd have thought about a game. Now it's out of the question."

Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "No, I think by their very nature Pogs are a short term craze. They will be in newsgroups for years to come, but their mass market appeal will be very short-lived."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "Possibly in '97, after the Christmas purchases. At the moment the PlayStation isn't really selling to that age group. A Pogs game might make the machine look a bit naff."

Topless Darts

It's the hottest new sport to have hit our screens since televised Subbuteo. *Topless Darts* is the flagship program of cable station Live TV. For those who haven't seen it, two sexy ladies with no tops on throw darts at a dartboard on a beach somewhere. They tend to miss the board, but that's okay because they've got no tops on! Phwoar! This would make for top quality video games entertainment, though it's important to make sure all the joystick controls can be enacted using only one hand.

LICENCE TO SELL

Peter Scott, Live TV: "Yes we would contemplate licensing a game. The game would involve taking your top off and playing darts. Or perhaps the game could involve travel. We film *Topless Darts* everywhere; Australia, Spain, California... Top comedian Jimmy Frinton does the commentary and he could provide some for the game. News Bunny could make a guest appearance, though obviously he wouldn't be topless. It's wholesome entertainment in the style of the *Carry On...* films. Good clean fun, not like the gory violence you see in some Sony games, which frankly disgusts me."

LICENCE TO BUY

Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "I'm not sure it would make much money, there's a very small consumer base. It might have potential as an adult game."

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "Could we include *Lunchbox Volleyball* in a multi-sports compilation? Those shows on Live TV last about ninety seconds and people's enjoyment of the game would last just about as long."

Steven Hey, Ocean: "We'd draw the line at *Topless Darts*. Maybe we could do a sports compilation with *Misshapen Frisbee Throwing* and *Championship Caravaning*.

Wincey Willis would introduce it and it would be called *Very Bizarre Sports*."

Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "Darts and titillation are a fatal combination in this industry. Games that have gone for boobs (eg *Strip Poker*) have been disastrous, and has there ever been a successful darts game? We'll give it a miss."

LICENCE TO KILL

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "If Sega can get away with *Sea Bass Fishing*, I don't see why we can get away with *Topless Darts*."

In conclusion...

So what have we learned? Rapido TV and Channel 4 both have a say in any *Eurotrash* licence. Waddingtons Games have stopped UK production of Pogs because "the market has reached saturation point"; in other words, people don't need to buy them when they get them free with chocolate and crisps. Irvine Welsh, author of *Trainspotting*, doesn't have an agent and he's disappeared off to India for a few months without leaving a contact number. Licensing a game from one of these products would take a bit of cross negotiation, a meeting with the fearsome World Pog Federation, or an expedition to Goa. But could these seven products really come out as licensed games? Not quite yet, says Alan at Sony: "If you're talking about 1998, with the size of installed user base we'll have then, the world is your oyster. Next year it will still be the core users, but by '98 any of those seven products could come out as games, and I'm sure some will."

So if it takes 18 months to develop a game, now's the time to start shopping. Which products have particularly caught our panel's eye? Come Easter '98, when you're have another crafty waggle on *Topless Darts* – the game, just remember whose idea it was in the first place. Find us and kill us.

FAVOURITES

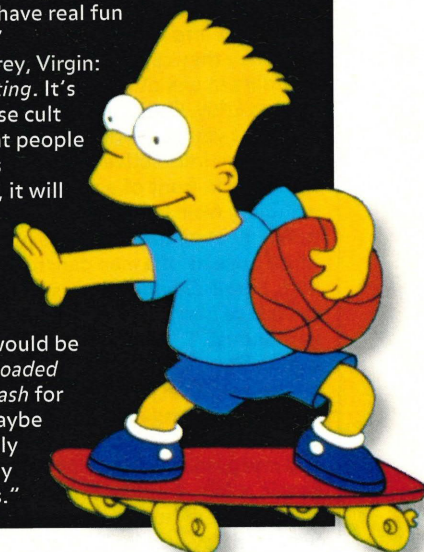
Simon Smith-Wright, Acclaim: "Church of England. It just opens up so much potential to explore new areas. I don't really think of it as a licence, though."

Richard Eddy, Codemasters: "*Trainspotting* as the game of the film. I'd like to say interactive movie, but that would be an insult to the creativity of Irvine Welsh. *Eurotrash* for the ideas."

Steven Hey, Ocean: "I'd like to have a go at a Church of England one. You could have real fun with that."

Simon Jeffrey, Virgin: "*Trainspotting*. It's one of those cult movies that people will always remember, it will never lose it's appeal."

Alan Wellsman, Sony: "It would be between *Loaded* and *Eurotrash* for me, but maybe that's partly down to my media bias."



Final Score

CHURCH OF ENGLAND...	2 VOTES
TRAINSPOTTING...	1.5 VOTES
EUROTRASH...	1 VOTE
LOADED...	0.5 VOTES
NO-ONE VOTED FOR GUINNESS, POGS OR TOPLESS DARTS. THE PHILISTINES.	



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NEXT MONTH



Next Month

New PlayStation Plus will also have the content worthy of its stunning new appearance, as **Street Fighter Alpha 2** rolls in for preview alongside the likes of **Little Big Adventure 2**, and **Guts and Garters**, while we'll also be featuring reviews of **Wipeout 2097**, **Final Doom**, **Burning Road**, **Mayhem**, **Mario Andretti Racing**, and **Project Overkill**.

But, best of all, PlayStation Plus will be the first magazine to go behind the scene of Gremlin's brightest forthcoming title — the all-action, all-carnage **Reloaded...**

PlayStation Plus has always been the essential independent guide to the PlayStation, but we've never been ones to rest on our laurels.

So start counting the days in preparation for the regenerated PlayStation Plus...

Volume 2 Issue 1

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Apologies to Mark Lancod, whose *Plus Points* letter in Issue 10 on product placement was accidentally attributed to another writer.

QUICKIES

As *Final Doom* is due out soon (fingers crossed it'll be by the autumn), do you think there's any possibility that, from the original shareware version of *Doom*, the new one will feature five difficulties – including Nightmare?

N M Papworth, Southampton

Don't know yet, but we should have more news in our preview – maybe next issue.

I just wondered if the best footie game ever, *Sensible World of Soccer*, will be coming out on the PlayStation soon?

Wayne Stewart, Belford

Nothing planned, sorry.



(UN)SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

I think the PlayStation is contracting a disease called Saturnpsychosis. Symptoms are that racing games must be identical to *Sega Rally* (ie *Burning Road*) and cars must look exactly like those in *Daytona USA* (now transforming themselves into the vehicles in *Destruction Derby 2*). Also, joypads are shaping themselves into ones similar to Saturn pads – giving you a Saturn feel when playing these games.

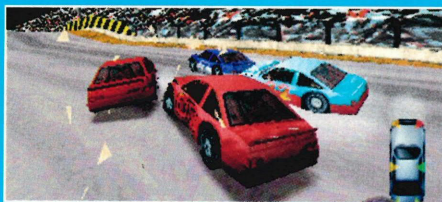
Meanwhile, my mate keeps winning in *Doom Deathmatch* and I'm getting stressed out. Any cheats for winning at Deathmatch?

Russell Davis, Gillingham

Nope, just get better at it. And, of course, you can't play anything similar to *Deathmatch Doom* on the Saturn.

After reading Issue 9 of *PlayStation Plus*, I realise I've fallen in love with the PlayStation even more.

At the moment, I don't actually own a PlayStation but after saving for a while I feel now's the time to get a machine and a few games. Everything else, from the Megadrive



to the Phillips CDi all lacked that something. The Sega had good gameplay but relatively poor graphics, while the Phillips had great graphics but poor gameplay. Mix the two and it seems to me you come up with the utterly brilliant Sony PlayStation. My first four purchases will have to be *Ridge Racer Revolution*, *Formula 1*, *Transport Tycoon* and the very good looking *Resident Evil*.

Hopefully, in a couple of months or so, I'll be writing again, giving you my opinion from one of the real people in the games business, the general public.

Incidentally, are there going to be any football management games due for release?

Stewart Savage, Colchester

There's the forthcoming *Madden '97* and *NFL*

Quarterback Club '96 which spring to mind.

I have recently purchased a PlayStation after months of deliberation. Finally, the price came down low enough and I purchased a machine with three games and two joypads for a very reasonable price. Then I ventured off to town, intending to buy a game or two for my new machine. After reading your review of *Resident Evil* and seeing the awesome screenshots, I was quite impressed with the capability of the machine. I was aware that the game had been put back several months, so I thought there would be plenty of others available with the same amazing graphics. I went into my local branch of Electronic Boutique and after a few moments of browsing, an assistant asked if I wanted any help. He was very helpful and after ascertaining that I didn't want *Doom* (yes, I believe him when he went on about how wonderful it was) I chose two games I would like to see working. *Krazy Ivan* and *Magic Carpet*. *Krazy Ivan* was loaded up and I stood awed as I watched the opening sequences. "My God," I thought. "This is the game for me." As I am sure anyone else who has seen this game will agree, that opening sequence is really pretty impressive.

Then: shock, horror – the game started. I was faced with a game that would have looked more at home on the SNES. It looked almost the same as *Mech Warrior*. I felt cheated. "Okay," I said, "show me *Magic Carpet*." That was loaded and I skipped the fancy intro to see what the actual game was like. While it looked very good I asked the assistant what the game's aim was? To this he replied "You fly around a lot and shoot things."

Oh.

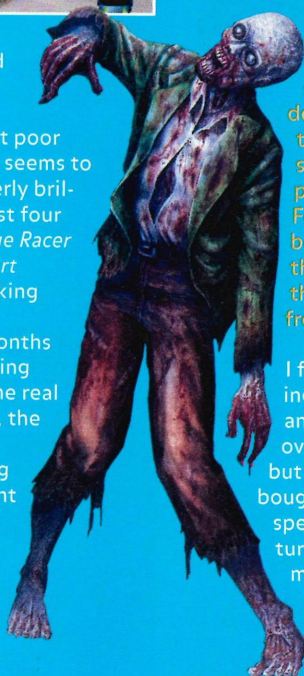
My reason for writing is that after many years of being a SNES owner and finally upgrading to the latest technology, I feel somewhat apprehensive parting with up to £50 for the latest game, if I could play the same for a lot less on the SNES. Why do software companies put so much time and energy into the opening titles and not the game itself? I agree that some of the PlayStation games have excellent graphics, but is this just a handful and are there loads more rubbish ones? I just hope and pray that *Resident Evil* is going to be worth it.

M A Davies, Bristol

Everyone seems to agree (unusually enough) that *Resident Evil* is pretty damn fantastic.

Krazy Ivan only got 73% from us, indicating that while it's good, there are a lot better games of that variety out there. And the shop assistant probably wasn't doing you (or the game) any favours to describe *Magic Carpet* (90%) in such simplistic terms. It's a bit like putting a skateboard next to a Ferrari and suggesting that because they both have wheels, there's no difference between them as "they can both move you from A to B."

I find myself either kissing or kicking my PlayStation (metaphorically, anyway). Don't get me wrong, I'm over the moon with its capabilities, but with some of the games I've bought, I've experienced slips in speech and sound, and paused pictures. When this happened in the middle of *Actua Soccer*, I just had to write in. I've heard a rumour that mine isn't the only one in the



world with this problem... far from it, in fact. So, is it simply a problem of cleaning the lens, or should I take it back now, as it's still under warranty?
Brett, Portsmouth

Slipage (picture breaks at the edge of walls, racetracks etc) is a fairly common problem with PlayStation games, but doesn't really affect the playability. If your machine is causing a great deal though, or crashing, it might be worth getting it looked at before that warranty dissolves.

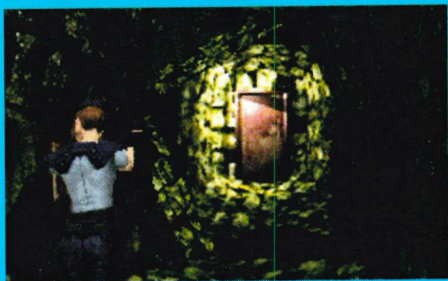
CENSORSHIP (PT ∞)

I was planning to buy *Resident Evil* until I found out that Virgin have decided to cut the game for its PAL reincarnation. Therefore, I have that the only way to gain satisfaction from a purchase of this game is to get one on import – a very irritating procedure over here in Ireland.

Personally, I find it unacceptable that Virgin have developed a desire to leave certain sections out of the final product, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, if the game carries an 18 certificate, it means that Virgin should acknowledge the fact that their potential customers are *not* children, are *not* people that will get nightmares from computerised graphics getting dismembered, or crap themselves just because some *animated* image has its head bitten off, or the head is left rolling across a floor. Just that the game will be violent and it will be very gory. So why not let the game run as it is? It's not as if someone will go loopy or breakdown because of a *little* extra realism, or a *little* extra blood dribbling.

Secondly, since the game is to be cut, it means that, once again, PAL PlayStation owners are going to get the short end of the stick in the games world. Don't we have enough to put up with enough shite? We already pay £50 for a game that moves slower, has squashed-looking graphics, has black borders on-screen and takes longer to reach



the public than its NTSC counterparts in Japan and America.

Thirdly, and most irritatingly, someone has decided to take the liberty of claiming that the game is not suitable in certain places for me to view. I am 19 years-old, above their age limit, and I think I am old enough to decide for myself if I want to see *extreme* violence. Whatever happened to the right to choose? I don't think I will be affected by *drawn* graphics mauling each other.

Sure, *Resident Evil* will be tense during play but I feel that rendered graphics will never fully portray the experience of really carrying out the actions they represent, especially since they're being controlled by a joystick. A bit of plastic with buttons linked into a television screen does not properly convey an experience in reality. Virgin – don't bend to censorship, please.

Stephen Wyley, Cork

ments, Stephen. As a 19 year-old, you are indeed deemed capable of making your own decisions, but the 18 certificate is there both to protect younger people and also Virgin themselves. If *Resident Evil* was accessible to everyone, those who do object to scenes of violence would be able to complain vociferously and, as schlock horror film buffs will attest, loud voices carry a lot of weight. Too many complaints and we won't see any future games like *Resident Evil* at all. In an ideal world, censorship wouldn't be necessary, but we're living in the real world. Surely it's far better for the industry to seek out certification rather than let someone else do it for them. It proves that the games industry is sensible enough to police itself rather than involve other authorities.

SORTED FOR E3

Your E3 report in Issue 10 was absolutely brilliant. No problem justifying the expense of travelling all that way, I have never read a games magazine containing such an enormous article on a subject, loads of info, heaps of surprises and, most of all thirty-some pages! Not your normal paltry four or five, that makes you want to go out and by another magazine afterwards to see if there is anything the former had missed.

Switching subjects, *Fade to Black* – I went straight out and bought it after reading your review. You said it was good, but that's like saying beer is nice, bit of an understatement if you ask me, its fantastic! If *Resident Evil* is going to be better, I can't wait, because *Fade to Black* is blowing my socks off as it is.

Andrew Raistrick, e-mail

Well done lads, the magazine has had a great first ten months. But now, some questions:

1. When exactly is *Resident Evil* coming out? I'm always seeing release dates being put back or knocked off altogether.
2. Is there any chance of a price cut on the first games that came out on PlayStation such as *WipEout* and *Ridge Racer*, surely it would encourage more sales?
3. What has happened to the PlayStation's advertising, why isn't it there anymore?
4. Remember the cover CD you had on *Doom* in Issue 3? Well why don't you do a cover CD every month, with demos of the best games in it every month?
5. Can you play *International Track and Field* in two player mode without the multi-tap? Thanks a lot for answering these cos' I really needed the information.

1. MacHardie, e-mail

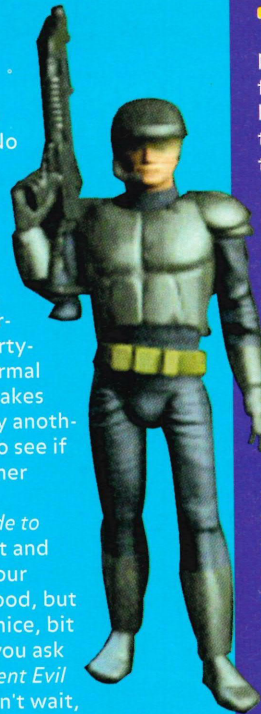
1: 14th of August was the most recent date we were given, so it should be in your hands by now.

2: We've not heard any of plans along this line. Nice idea, though.

3: No doubt the ads will be back, with or without the SAPS.

4: Yawn. One good disc is worth ten boring ones. We've said it before but... if we do another disc, it'll be for something we think is worth the extra expense to you.

5: Yes



FAQ

The most frequently asked questions of the month are, once again, met with straight answers.

I'm a big fan of the 'oldie but goldie' compilations, such as Namco Museum Vol. 1 and Williams Arcade Classics. Can you tell me if any other software houses are looking to string a few of their older games together?

Namco's *Museum* series is set to span five CDs (with each featuring a different letter from their name on the cover), and the next, fourth edition is said to feature *PACLand* among its five titles, while the superb *Metrocross* is said to be the star of the final collection. Similarly, Acclaim's deal with Taito which brought us *Bust-A-Move 2* is going to bring *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands* to the PlayStation, with Probe handling the coding of the former, and Amiga veterans Graftgold doing the honours for the far superior sequel.

Also in the pipeline is an Irem compilation with *Kung-Fu Master* and *Ten-Yard Fight* and a crappy race game whose name escapes me, but a PAL release has yet to be confirmed. We also hear that the likes of *Gorf* and *Phoenix* may appear on a shoot 'em up CD, but there is no news of who is planning to release it.

What has happened to Cool Spot Goes To Hollywood, I saw it in the first issue of your magazine and was quite impressed. Now, a year later, I'm still waiting. When is it due?

Virgin's isometric platformer is indeed looking very tasty indeed, but the developers are keen to make it as good as possible so it has been put back time and time again to add new touches to the code. Virgin have recently taken delivery of a new batch of code, and are said to be very pleased with the result, and *Cool Spot Goes to Hollywood* should finally reach the shops nearer Christmas, making it one of the most delayed games ever.

I am a massive football game fan, and have bought all the recently-released titles. However, I have still yet to find a game good enough to rival ISS on the Super NES, what new ones are on the cards?

If you're a fan of ISS (*International Superstar Soccer*) for the Super NES, you be pleased to learn that Konami are planning a PlayStation version. Alternatively, EA have *FIFA '97* on the cards, Ocean have secured the UEFA licence for a game being developed in France, while it is rumoured a sequel to *Striker* is being planned, and that US Gold are looking into a second stab at the football cherry.

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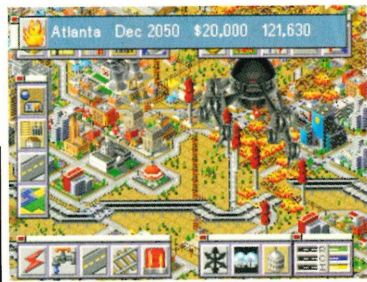
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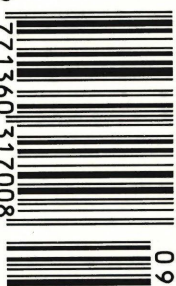
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